

JULIAN OF NORWICH:
A THEOLOGICAL REAPPRAISAL

by
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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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Title of Thesis Julian of Norwich: A Theological Reappraisal

In recent years there has developed a popular interest in the medieval re-
cluse and visionary, Dame Julian of Norwich. Her single book, Revelations of
Divine Love, records sixteen "shewings" which she received during the day and
night of May 8, 1373. The Revelations is primarily a theological, rather than
autobiographical, work, and touches upon virtually every aspect of Christian doc-
trine. Julian is better known, however, as a source of meditation, than as a theo-
logian. Some aspects of her thought which have been noted in the literature in-
clude her concept of the "motherhood of God", her statement that sin "has no man-
ner of substance nor particle of being" (i.e., that it has no positive existence),
and her bald assertion that "there is no wrath in God". She has also been quoted,
in poetry as well as in critical works, for her optimistic vision of the Last Judge-
ment, that "all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall
be well". Out of context, these elements of the Revelations have been subjected to
a variety of interpretations, including the (heretical) ones that God is never dis-
pleased with sin, that sin does not exist, or that all souls shall be equally "sav-
ed" on the Last Day.

At the present time, no comprehensive study of Julian's theology has been pub-
lished, with the exception of one account which limits itself to the nature of her
visions and her description of contemplative prayer. While there is considerable
disagreement in the literature regarding her value as a theologian, and the char-
acter of her thought as a whole, it has been widely assumed that she borrows Neo-
platonistic concepts available to her through other English mystics of her time, not-
ably Walter Hilton and the anonymous author of The Cloud of Unknowing; or from
other sources including the translated works of Pseudo-Dionysius, the Victorine
mystics, Meister Eckhardt, or Jan van Ruysbroeck. Published accounts of her work
consist largely of comparisons of her thought with that of her more eminent con-
temporaries; and of attempts either to establish her as a mystic along the lines
of Platonic mysticism (seen especially in the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius) or
along "traditional" Catholic lines (laid down primarily by the Spanish Carmelite
mystics, Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, nearly two centuries later).

The present study is an attempt to reassess the value of Julian of Norwich
as an important theologian, whose doctrine in the Revelations not only does not
recapitulate Neoplatonic thought, but represents a significant challenge to it;
and which, while it is Catholic, is also highly original, strongly resembling
Byzantine mystical theology and Orthodox thought as a whole. Because of the lim-
itations of space and practicality, no attempt has been made to compare her thought
in detail with other theologies, except where similarities to earlier or contem-
porary works which she might have known seem obvious. Rather, a systematic ap-
proach to her theology, suggested by Julian herself in the Revelations, is ex-
plored, underlining its major elements and drawing out her original contributions
to Christian theology in the West. In particular, she is seen to develop an on-
tological understanding of divine Love, and therefore of sin and salvation, based
on her vision of the Trinity "in" Christ: that in the Incarnation, the Trinity is
economically revealed, incorporating humanity into God in the relationship of
"homely" love.

Use other side if necessary.

I declare that this thesis is the product
of my own research and reflection.

August 6, 1976

TO SHARON

A perfect wife--who can find her?
She is far beyond the price of pearls.

IN MEMORY OF

REVEREND PROFESSOR JAMES C. BLACKIE

PREFACE

In recent years there has developed a popular interest in the medieval recluse and visionary, Dame Julian of Norwich. Her single book, Revelations of Divine Love (which has been published in editions of both the Longer and Shorter manuscript versions), records sixteen "shewings" which she received during the day and night of May 8, 1373. The Revelations is primarily a theological, rather than autobiographical, work, and touches upon virtually every aspect of Christian doctrine. Some aspects of her thought which have been noted in the literature include her concept of the "Motherhood of God", her statement that sin "has no manner of substance nor particle of being" (i.e., that it has no positive existence), and her bald assertion that "there is no wrath in God". She has also been quoted, in poetry as well as in critical works, for her optimistic vision of the Last Judgement, that "all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well".¹ Out of context, these elements of the Revelations have been subjected to a variety of interpretations, including the (heretical) ones that God is never displeased with sin, that sin does not exist, or that all souls shall be equally "saved" on the Last Day.

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- 1 The quotation by T. S. Eliot in "Little Gidding" (the last of Four Quartets) must be at least partially responsible for Julian's popularity in this century. The poem ends with lines which are now famous:

And all shall be well and
 All manner of thing shall be well
 When the tongues of flame are in-folded
 Into the crowned knot of fire
 And the fire and the rose are one. (Eliot, T. S., Collected Poems 1909-1962, Faber and Faber Ltd., London, 1936 /fifth impression, 1970/ p. 223.).

At the present time, no comprehensive study of Julian's theology has been published, with the exception of one account which limits itself to the nature of her visions and her description of contemplative prayer. While there is considerable disagreement in the literature regarding her value as a theologian, and the character of her thought as a whole, it has been widely assumed that she borrows Neoplatonic concepts available to her through other English mystics of her time, notably Walter Hilton and the anonymous author of The Cloud of Unknowing; or from other sources including the translated works of Pseudo-Dionysius, the Victorine mystics, Meister Eckhardt, or Jan van Ruysbroeck. Published accounts of her work consist largely of comparisons of her thought with that of her more eminent contemporaries, and of attempts either to establish her as a mystic along the lines of Platonic mysticism (seen especially in the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius), or along "traditional" Catholic lines (laid down primarily by the Spanish Carmelite mystics, Teresa of Ávila and John of the Cross, nearly two centuries later).

The present study is an attempt to reassess the value of Julian of Norwich as an important theologian, whose doctrine in the Revelations not only does not recapitulate Neoplatonic thought, but represents a significant challenge to it; and which, while it is Catholic, is also highly original in its interpretation, strongly resembling Byzantine mystical theology and Orthodox thought as a whole. Because of the limitations of space and practicality, no attempt has been made here to compare her thought in detail with other theologies, except where similarities to earlier or contemporary works which she might have known seemed obvious. Rather, a systematic approach to her theology suggested by Julian herself in the Revelations, is explored, underlining its major elements and drawing out her original contributions to Christian

theology in the West.

Because Julian's overall approach to theology has already been interpreted more than once by Catholic writers, stressing her similarities to Thomas Aquinas, to the Carmelite mystics and others (particularly with regard to the nature of her visions, and assuming a "moral/affective" approach to the virtues or the concept of sin), the present study emphasizes the characteristics of her thought along different lines. She is seen, for example, to develop an ontological understanding of divine Love, and therefore of sin and salvation. This is not to deny her a medieval concept of sin as a moral quality; but it is to argue that, for Julian, moral qualities reflect states of being rather than merely states of mind. In particular, the "virtue" of love is understood in terms of the Incarnation, the communion of the Trinity and humanity in one person--reflecting the Being of the Trinity itself, in which Persons are seen to "indwell" one another in a relationship which Julian calls "homely love". While her theology is considered to be Christocentric, it is also decidedly Trinitarian--not an extreme emphasis on "Christ alone", but on the manifestation of the Trinity in the person of Christ, incorporating humanity into God.

Many times in the preparation of the text the author was urged to curtail the area of study to one aspect of Julian's study, with good reason. Although her prose is simple and often poetic, Julian is a subtle writer whose insights are not always immediately grasped. However, it seemed valuable to obtain, if possible, an overview of her thought which might be explored in more detail later on. It is especially hoped that the practical implications of her thought will become evident, not only regarding the nature of prayer, but in our whole

understanding of the human relationship to God, of the nature of humanity itself and the human response which is possible in his divine Love.

* * *

The James Walsh edition of the Revelations has been quoted throughout this study, except where otherwise indicated, because it is readily available and because it faithfully conveys the sense of the MSS., although it is not a critical edition. A paperback edition in modern English by Clifton Wolters, and a paperback edition of the Shorter Version by Anna Maria Reynolds, are also in print and have been consulted, along with other editions which are listed separately in the Bibliography. Scripture quotations are from the Common Bible, except where otherwise indicated.

Abbreviations following quotations from the Revelations are as follows:

[no notation] = James Walsh edition of Revelations of Divine Love

C.W. = Clifton Wolters edition

Warrack = Grace Warrack edition

SGL = A Shewing of God's Love (the Reynolds edition Shorter Version)

AMR = unpublished critical edition of the MSS. by Anna Maria Reynolds (doctoral thesis at Leeds University)

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It would be impossible to acknowledge adequately all who have contributed directly or indirectly to this study. Chief among these is the late Professor James Blackie, who urged the undertaking of this work and who contributed much towards making the author's study at New College possible. His encouragement and guidance will be missed by all who were his students.

At various times during the course of study, advice has been received both officially and unofficially from a number of scholars. Father Noel D. O'Donoghue did much to sharpen the focus of this work and to modify its tone to bring it more into line with Julian's own medieval setting. The Rev. Dr. Gian Tellini provided clues to many of the references and gave technical advice concerning medieval theology and worship. Their careful criticism and suggestions are gratefully acknowledged, although the viewpoints expressed in this study are not necessarily shared by them, and errors in scholarship and evaluation are readily accepted to be the author's.

It will be apparent to those who are familiar with their work that many of the concepts which underlie this study were derived from Professor T. F. Torrance at New College and Dr. John Zizioulas, now at Glasgow University. Again, the author apologizes for misconstructions of their theology while acknowledging their role in shaping this approach to Julian's theology. Mr. George Dragas, now at Durham University, spent hours with the author discussing Greek Orthodoxy, and his advice and hospitality as a brother in Christ is very much appreciated. Mr. Frank D. Sayer, librarian at the Colman and Rye Library of Local History, Norwich, is gratefully acknowledged for having provided invaluable assistance in researching historical information.

The personal assistance and advice provided by Sister Anna Maria Reynolds, C.P., formerly at Trinity and All Saints' Colleges, Leeds, is deeply appreciated, as well as the hospitality of the sisters there. Special appreciation is due to the Reverend Mother and to the sisters at All Hallows, Norwich, and at All Hallows House, Ditchingham, with whom the author spent many happy days. The sisters provided valuable historical information regarding Mother Julian and the parish; most of all, they lent a rare and beautiful atmosphere of contemplative worship, in which meditation on the Revelations of Divine Love plays a major part. The author regards them as true sisters in Christ and hopes to remain part of their permanent "family". Father Michael McLean, of St. Julian's, shared along with the sisters not only on a scholarly level but also on a spiritual one. His role in the formation of this study is far greater than he imagines. The author also wishes to thank Sister Mary Magdalene, O.H.P., for her prayers and encouragement. Her life as an anchoress not far from Julian's own Norwich must be a blessing to all who know her.

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Spiritual assistance cannot be evaluated by human standards, so that acknowledgements here become meaningless. Yet the author wishes to thank Canon Roland Walls for his counsel about Mother Julian, for his prayers, and for his personal guidance. It was his suggestion to write this study of

Julian's Revelations despite his reluctance to subject Mother Julian to analysis outside the context of prayer. Indeed, any study of her, including this one, must fail when it strays from "beholding" the face of God, as Julian would say. God will acknowledge Canon Walls' work and his ministry in the Spirit.

The support, encouragement, assistance and prayers of the brothers at Coates Hall, the Episcopal Theological College, Edinburgh, have likewise extended beyond the limits of this paper. The Reverend Canon K.A.G. Strachan especially contributed, both as librarian and as pastor. The Reverend and Mrs. Humphrey Lopdell-Bradshaw lent their prayers, their ideas and the use of their home over the past two years, demonstrating the communion that we have in the Body of Christ.

The labours and consistent love of the author's family, reflecting their own love of God, will best be acknowledged before Him, "for the time of their willing service", as Julian saw it in her Revelations. The author's father and mother worked hard to make this study possible, sharing all their resources. His wife and children, besides providing love and joy, waited patiently during the periods of separation required by research. His mother performed the difficult task of typing this thesis; may she be richly rewarded.

B.P.

Austin, Texas
Feast of the Transfiguration, 1976

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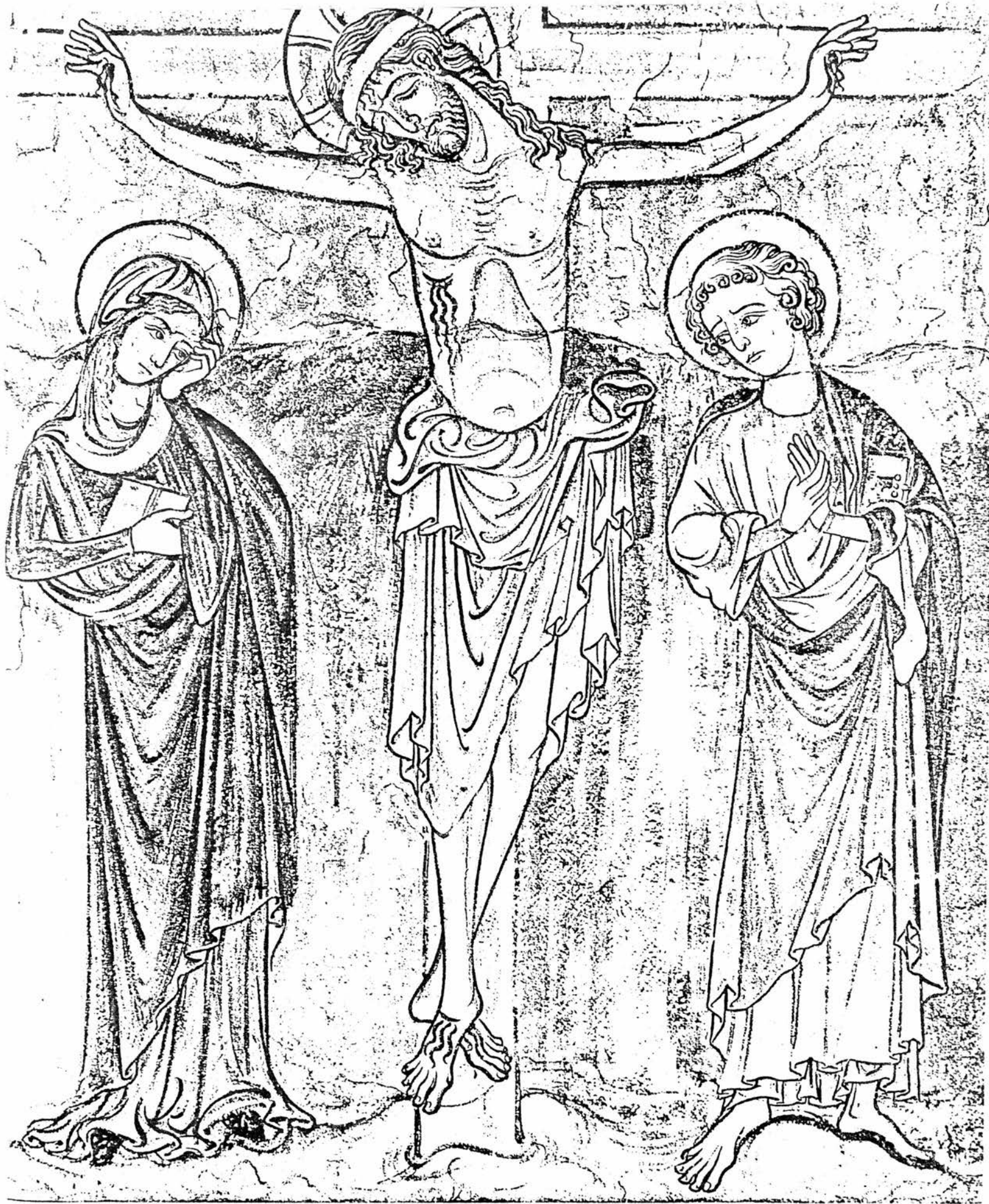
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CRUCIFIXION, HORSHAM ST. FAITH'S PRIORY, NORFOLK

I.

SHEWINGS AND REVELATIONS OF ENDLESS LOVE:

AN INTRODUCTION TO DAME JULIAN AND THE REVELATIONS

CHAPTER ONE: EXPLICIT JULIANE DE NORWYCH

Three Gifts of God's Grace

At four o'clock in the morning on May 8, 1373--about dawn, the second Sunday after Easter--a young woman known to us as Julian of Norwich experienced the first of sixteen extraordinary "shewings" concerning the love of God.¹ She was mortally ill, having taken to her bed a week before; but she was fully conscious, and was to remain so, throughout her visions. Still, her condition was poor: after three days and three nights in pain, it had become apparent that she was dying; and on the fourth night she had received the Last Rites

¹ The following account is reconstructed from the Revelations, Ch. 1-14 and 16-18 (Longer Version), and from the Shorter Version, Ch. I-IV, except where otherwise indicated. The date for Julian's "shewings" is either May 8 or May 13 (Ch. 2, p. 47). The Paris MS reads "the .xiii. Daie of may", and this reading appears in the Grace Warrack and James Walsh editions. The Sloane MSS read "the viii th day of may", which date is accepted by Sr. Reynolds in her unpublished critical edition, and by Clifton Wolters. Obviously the discrepancy is due to a scribal misreading, in copying the date, of "xiii" for "viii", or the other way around. A late copyist's error is suggested since the date could have been emended in Julian's lifetime or recent memory, and since the error (in whichever direction) did not affect all the MSS. It has been suggested that May 8, a Sunday, is correct because it is the day following the feast of St. John of Beverley, who is mentioned by Julian in Ch. 38 (p. 108). Sr. Reynolds suggests, however, that the mention of St. John appears almost as an afterthought in the Longer Version, perhaps due to later enthusiasm over reputed miracles in his name; and therefore it should not be taken as proof of the date (AMR, p. 315). Julian's reference to the Passion and to Easter, implied in her visions, make May 8 a more attractive date, inasmuch as it fell on the third Sunday after Easter in 1373 (Old Style calendar). (For the method of interpreting medieval dates see Cheney, C.R., Handbook of Dates for Students of English History, Offices of the Royal Historical Society, London, 1961.)

In Ch. 65 Julian gives the hour as about four in the morning, or about the hour of dawn for that time of year (Greenwich time). By 1373 she could have known the time with reasonable accuracy, since there was a cathedral clock which regulated time throughout the city. The cathedral had an automata and astronomical clock by 1325 (Clutton, Cecil, et.al., Britten's Old Clocks and Watches and Their Makers, 8th Ed., Methen, London, 1973).

of the Church. For the two days and two nights following she continued to suffer, and on the third night after her anointing by the priest--the seventh night of her illness--there seemed to be no doubt that she would be dead before morning. At daybreak, however, she was still alive. Attendants propped her up in bed, and cooled her forehead with damp cloths. With her mother at her side, the priest was sent for once more. She was only thirty years old.

By the time her curate arrived, Julian's eyes were fixed in an upwards stare, and she was unable to speak. She already had the sensation, as she described it later, of being "dead from the waist downwards." Nevertheless the priest, who had brought with him a child bearing a crucifix, set the image at the foot of her bed and directed her to look at it. Perhaps, he said, she would be strengthened by looking upon her Saviour. Painfully, she struggled to comply; and immediately, the room fell into darkness "as murky as night".

As Julian focussed on the cross in the gloom, it began to glow--lit up as though it were in broad daylight. Possibly, a ray of sunlight had found its way through a window to Julian's bedside. But to her, the light was clearly supernatural, emanating from the cross itself; and the room about her seemed, by contrast, to be filled with the presence of evil--the powers of darkness. Meantime, she began to lose feeling in the upper half of her body as well, and her hands dropped helplessly to her side. She experienced difficulty breathing, which gave her considerable pain. Gradually she became aware that it was, indeed, time for her to die, despite her youth and despite her desire to live more graciously for God.

And then, quite suddenly and without warning, Julian's pain was completely gone. Especially in the upper half of her body, which only moments before had

been entirely numb, she felt normal and "alive". On the other hand, she did not know whether to trust the apparent healing as real, and she was not even sure that she desired it. Through the week she had changed her mind about death--first regretting it, because of her youth, but later looking forward to it. If her life were no longer of any use to God, it would be better to move on to another life, where there would be no sin and no discomfort. An odd thought passed through her mind, which had occurred to her before during her illness: by suffering in her fever, she could participate somehow in the crucifixion of Christ. If she were to be healed, however, even this element of piety would be taken away from her.

The idea of sharing in the pain of the crucifixion was not a new one for Julian. Once, perhaps as a child, she had specifically prayed for it. On that occasion she had heard the story of "St. Cecily"--Cecelia--told by a "man of Holy Church".² It was said that Cecily, a Christian girl of noble birth in ancient Rome, was betrothed against her will to the pagan Valerian. On their wedding night, Cecily told him of her pledge to virginity and to a chaste love, and subsequently converted him to Christianity--partially through a vision of the angel who guarded Cecily's welfare. Valerian's brother Tibertius was similarly converted, through the teaching of the angel. Refusing to perform an act of worship to Jupiter, the two men were martyred. By their steadfast faith, however, they converted Maximus, an officer of the guard, who was also martyred following his baptism. For Cecily, an especially cruel death

2 This detail is given in the Shorter Version, Ch. I (SGL, p. 3). Whether there was a genuine "Cecily" to whom these things happened is not known. However, the story as Julian may have heard it is recounted by Chaucer in Canterbury Tales as "The Second Nun's Tale". Chaucer's Tales are exactly contemporary with Julian (Chaucer died c. 1400). Another contemporary account has been preserved in Legends of the Saints in the Scottish Dialect of the Fourteenth Century, Vol. II, ed. W. M. Metcalfe, Scottish Text Society (William Blackwood and Sons), Edinburgh, 1896, pp. 368-386.

was devised: she was to be boiled alive in her own steam-bath. This effort miraculously failed, however, and a soldier was sent to cut off her head with a sword. Again, the effort failed: after three blows to the neck, leaving her mortally wounded but alive, the soldier was required by law to desist. Cecily lingered for three more days, preaching the faith and giving away her property to the poor.

Julian was impressed by the story. Coupled with vivid paintings she had seen of the crucifixion, it moved her to desire a greater sanctity, and to serve the crucified Lord in some special way, as had Cecelia. Presumably, this included a vow to chastity, although Julian does not say. In particular, however, she prayed for three spiritual "wounds" of her own, one for each of Cecily's death-blows. Whether out of a kind of childish, secret commitment to Christ, or whether through the mature guidance of a confessor, Julian prayed for the gifts of true contrition, compassion, and a deep longing for God.

The most important of these gifts, for the moment, was what she called "compassion". The medieval sense was more than "feeling sorry" for someone. First, Julian referred specifically to Christ: compassion meant to understand his suffering on the cross, and therefore to be properly contrite for her own sins which had put him there. Beyond that, com-passion meant, literally, to suffer along with him. In her original prayer, she desired a kind of martyrdom, following the example of Cecily, in which she would actually share in Christ's pains and in the painful ordeal of his disciples at the cross. In the week-long illness, Julian's opportunity had come to participate in his mortal suffering, and she was reluctant to let it pass so suddenly. She made up her mind, almost, to remain ill, to think upon the crucifixion which she saw depicted in front of her.

While all these thoughts presented themselves, the cross at the foot of Julian's bed continued to glow. But suddenly, the image changed again: incredibly, the figure of Christ came alive before Julian's eyes, as the crown of thorns began to bleed. First, bright red blood welled up beneath the crown, ran down Jesus' face in rivulets, and pooled at the eyebrows and at the edges of his hair. Then the blood began to come in huge droplets, like rain, and in waves, as though the large vessels of the scalp and forehead had been severed. Julian noticed that the face was brown and handsome; but it was disfigured by the marks of beating. Gradually, the skin darkened with bruises and clotting blood, first on one side and then on the other. Its colour changed from brown to blue and purple, to greenish-blue, and to the ashen colour of death. The blood dried up and turned brown, leaving a double "garland" of blood and thorns around Jesus' head; the flesh hung loosely around the thorns, and dried out, like a cloth hung in the wind. Indeed, a sharp wind began to blow around the cross, "dreadfully cold". At this point, the vision began to fade into darkness, and Julian found it more difficult to make out the features of the crucifix in front of her.

Then, as suddenly as the vision began, the face of Jesus was transfigured into an incredible beauty. In this vision of the Transfigured Christ, Julian felt a transformation in herself: from a preoccupation with suffering and death, to an inexpressible joy and a sense of absolute assurance. At once she began to be taught by Jesus--sometimes in visions, sometimes as he spoke to her, and sometimes without any words, but simply by things that she understood as he looked at her. There were several distinct "revelations", each about God's love. Later, Julian was to divide them into three groups: those which taught about the Love which is God himself, the Trinity; those

concerning the perfect love which God has for mankind, and which Julian saw in Jesus' face; and those which depicted the Love which Jesus had for her personally, and created in her, through the visions themselves. Julian remarked that in her experience, it was not an angel who taught her, like Tibertius, but God himself--the Holy Trinity, without any intermediary.

The visions lasted for several hours, from four in the morning until "past Nones of the day", that is, about three in the afternoon.³ Julian had seen the Transfiguration three times and she had seen the Virgin Mary three times (the first time as little more than a child, at the time of the annunciation; the last time, at the cross). She had experienced the presence,

3 The text for this passage, in Ch. 65 (p. 175) reads:

Now haue I tolde you of .xv. shewings as god whytsafe to minyster them to my mynde renewde by lyghtenyngs and touchynges I hope of the same spiryte that shewyth them alle. of whych .xv. shewynges ye furst beganne erly in ye mornynge aboute the oure of .iiij. and it lastyd shewyng by processe fulle feyer and soberly eche folowyng other tylle it was none of ye day or paste. (AMR, p. 258)

The phrase "none of ye day" has been variously interpreted to mean "nine" or "noon". Further, the interpretation "nine" has been taken either to mean nine in the morning, or nine at night. The James Walsh edition renders "past three in the day", probably for the following reasons: The reading "nine" does not seem permissible since Julian uses the word "nine" later on, to mean that hour (ch. 70, p. 182). A scribal error of "none" for "nine" is possible, but seems unlikely in view of the fact that the canonical hours, including None or Nones, were frequently used in Julian's day to indicate the time. Confusion arises, however, over the interpretation of "none".

The word "none" is of course the origin of our "noon", and indicates mid-day (the "ninth" hour). The canonical Nones, or recognized mid-day, did not, however, fall at "noon" our time, but around three or four in the afternoon--varying according to a complicated arrangement which depended on the seasonal changes in day- and nighttime hours. With the introduction of mechanical clocks that fixed a 60-minute hour, and the standardization of the hours of the day, Nones was fixed at three o'clock, as it would have been in Julian's time. (See Cheney, *op. cit.*, P. 9; and Butler, Dom Cuthbert, *Benedictine Monachism*, Longmans, Green and Col, London, 1919, Pp. 275 ff.) The fact that Julian's visions begin with the Passion should not be overlooked. Tradition places the hour of Jesus' death at Nones (Matthew 27:45 ff.)--a point which would not have been lost on Julian.

somehow, of the whole Trinity--though she could not describe it; and she had seen a vivid, and puzzling, vision of a great Lord and his servant, whom she took to be God the Father, seated on the throne of heaven, and God the Son, clothed in human flesh. Before the visions ended, she noted that the blood--if it had been real--would have soaked the sheets of her bed, it was so profuse. Altogether she counted fifteen separate Revelations of Divine Love, each shown to her as she looked at the face of Jesus on the cross. When Jesus vanished, leaving only the crucifix, Julian's pain returned instantly--first in her head, "with a loud sound and a noise"--and then in her entire body. This time, however, she felt certain that she would not die.

In the evening, another priest--"a religious, a parson"--came to see how Julian fared during the day.⁴ She was able to talk with him, and she told him that she had been "raving" from her fever. The priest laughed, and Julian felt cheered enough to tell him what she saw in her delirium: "The cross that stood at my bed's foot...it bled fast!" But at these words, the priest stopped laughing, and waited silently for her to tell the full measure of what she had seen. Julian later described her humiliation as she realized how seriously the priest was taking her words, even though she referred to the visions as delirium. He was ready to believe that she had seen the Lord; but she, who had actually experienced the visions only a short while before, was already treating them lightly. "At the time when I saw Him I believed it firmly", she wrote, "and it was then my will and my meaning to continue to believe without end. But as a fool I allowed it to pass from my mind, wretch that I am." Ashamed of herself, she was torn between the urge to make a

⁴ These events are described in Ch. 65-66 of the Longer Version (Pp. 175 ff.).

confession for having denied the Lord, and the thought that no one would believe her vision anyway, because she had not believed it herself.

The "shewings" were not discussed any further, and at nightfall Julian drifted back into sleep. Shortly thereafter, she was awakened with a start. Someone was choking her--she was being strangled by a "fiend"! Women rushed forward to bathe her temples. She thought the room was burning, and smelled something foul, like sulphur. She could see smoke pouring into the room from under the door. "God bless us!" she cried. "Is all the place on fire?" Her companions told her that nothing was burning, and she felt relieved: it was a fiend; the visions had begun again.⁵ "Blessed be God!" she exclaimed, and

⁵ In Ch. 66 Julian gives the time as "on the nyght folowyng" (AMR, p. 285). This has uniformly been taken to mean a day later, in the evening--a reading which seems obvious at first glance, especially if we take Julian's "none of the day or past" to mean that the first fifteen visions lasted all day, until nine o'clock at night. The problem with this interpretation, however, is that it requires a period of 24 hours to have elapsed between Julian's fifteenth vision, and the sixteenth (and final) one. A longer gap must be allowed for; if we take "none" to be 3 P.M.; and a still longer one if we read "nine in the morning". A gap of any considerable length seems unlikely, on the other hand, because of the continuity of the visions: the content of the Sixteenth Revelation almost requires it to follow immediately upon Julian's conversation with the priest, which in turn followed upon the completion of her first fifteen "shewings".

A solution is found if we look more carefully to the text. Julian says (Ch. 66) that after the visions ended, "Then came a religious...", implying that he came on the same afternoon. This is borne out by Julian's words to him, "I said I had raved during the day" (not "the previous day"; and not merely "in the morning"). Ch. 66 concludes with the words, "And I lay still until night, trusting in his mercy; and then I began to sleep". Again, the implication is that this followed immediately upon the priest's visit. The standard interpretation hitherto, that Julian's reference is to the following night, would mean that it took her 24 hours to fall asleep! Indeed, Ch. 67 begins with the words, "And in my sleep...", making a continuous narrative. The conclusion can only be that Julian's final vision, commencing with the "fiend", took place on the same night as her visit with the priest (to whom she said she had "raved"); which in turn was just after the cessation of her first fifteen visions, in the afternoon. Later on (ch. 70) we are told that the Sixteenth Revelation, with its repeated temptations by the fiends, lasted all night until "in the morning, till it was about nine in the day"--or 9 A.M. (the Shorter Version has "till it was about the hour

the fiend vanished. Jesus appeared to her once more, speaking words of comfort and admonishing her about the nature of the visions she had through the day:

You know well enough that it was no raving that you saw today. But take it; hold on to it; comfort yourself with it and trust it. You will not be overcome. (C.W., ch. 68, p. 184)

It was Julian's sixteenth, and final, vision of the Lord. As the shewing unfolded through the night, lasting until nine o'clock the next morning, she became still more aware of the incredible love of God for her and for every creature on earth. She felt that the Trinity was dwelling within her, in the person of Jesus--the "city of God" being within her own heart, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The visit of the fiend was repeated, but the horror of evil which she felt and saw was completely dispelled by the words and quiet love of Jesus. She began to understand what it meant to say that Christ overcame evil in the cross.

When the vision ended, Julian was certain that she had not been delirious, nor had she been dreaming. She could not have been dreaming because she had been fully awake through the whole experience, except when the fiend first awakened her. She had spoken with the other persons in the room. Early on, when she could not yet move, she was fully aware when her mother stepped forward to close her eyes, thinking that she was dead--and Julian had been annoyed, because this act of kindness interfered with her vision of Jesus' face.⁶ The

of prime", SGL p. 71). We note in passing that if Julian's first visions ended at the traditional hour of Jesus' death, the last one ended at the hour of the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:15).

⁶ Described in the Shorter Version Ch. X (SGL, p. 29)

profound nature of the visions themselves showed that they were not delirium. Beyond these things, she received, in the final vision, a certainty of what she saw, such that she would never forget it nor doubt that it was from God. After the final "shewing" she took the experience quite seriously, as a revelation of God's Love which was meant to be shared with others.

The final point which convinced Julian that her visions were genuine came later, when she recalled an astounding fact. On the occasion of her prayer long ago for the three "wounds", she had also prayed especially for two other gifts of God's grace. One was to have a supernatural vision of the crucifixion; the other was to experience an illness in which she would come so close to death, that she would actually receive the Last Rites and be thought dead. Julian had prayed for these somewhat timidly, only "if God willed"; and she had forgotten her prayers altogether. But she had specifically asked that the vision and the illness should happen in her youth--if possible, she had said, before she reached the age of thirty...

* * *

A Devout Recluse at Norwich

The account of Julian's visions which we have just seen may be reconstructed from her own book, Revelations of Divine Love. It is a short book, only about 150 pages in a modern edition, and is written in very simple language. So far as is known, Julian never wrote anything else. The book exists, however, in two forms: four manuscripts of a "longer version", and one of a substantially shorter version of the same work.⁷ By comparing the

⁷ Sr. Reynolds dates the manuscripts as follows (SGL, p. 93):

(i) British Museum Additional MS 37790, mid-fifteenth century. [This is the MS known as the "Shorter Version". Older editions--e.g. Chambers--

two versions carefully, scholars have agreed that the shorter version is not an abridgement of the longer one, but was in fact composed first--perhaps shortly after Julian's experience of the visions--and was rewritten and expanded at a later date.⁸

Julian tells us herself, in the Longer Version (ch. 86), that her book needed to be re-written; and it has been pointed out that the lack of personal references in this longer version, together with its much-expanded theological content, suggest that a more mature Julian decided to place more emphasis on the theological importance of her visions than on herself as a woman visionary.⁹ She tells us, too, that her book (presumably in its longer form)

refer to it as the "Amherst MS" because it was previously owned by Lord Amherst.⁷

- (ii) Westminster Cathedral Manuscript, late fifteenth or early sixteenth century. [This MS contains only extracts from the Longer Version, together with works by Walter Hilton, Julian's contemporary. An edition of this text, in modernized English, has been published: Walsh, James, S.J., and Eric Colledge, Of the Knowledge of Ourselves and of God: A Fifteenth-Century Spiritual Florilegium, Mobray and Co. Ltd., London, 1961. According to Sr. Reynolds, the quotations from the Revelations appear to be derived from the Paris MS.⁷
 - (iii) Biblioteque Nationale, Paris, Fonds Anglais, 40, sixteenth century.
 - (iv) British Museum Sloane MS 2499, mid-seventeenth century.
 - (v) British Museum Sloane MS 3705, late seventeenth or early eighteenth century.
- ⁸ First suggested by Harford, p. 8. The problem is discussed by Sr. Reynolds in An Edition of MS Sloane 2499 of Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love By Julian of Norwich, unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Leeds, May, 1947, pp. vii-viii, and in her published edition of the Shorter Version (SGL, 2nd Ed., pp. xii-xiii). See also Molinari, Paul, S. J., Julian of Norwich: The Teaching of a 14th Century English Mystic, Longmans, Green and Co., London, 1958, pp. 4-5, and Walsh, pp. 1-2.
- ⁹ That Julian re-wrote her own book is suggested in the chapter heading to Ch. 86, but not in the text itself. The heading begins, "The good Lord

waited twenty years to be written, during which time she meditated on the meaning of her visions, and specifically on the visual parable of the Lord and the servant.¹⁰

No other account of Julian's sixteen Revelations is available, and virtually nothing else is known with certainty about Julian herself beside what she tells us in her book--namely, the date of the visions, her age (thirty and one-half in 1373) and, in the Shorter Version, the immediate circumstances of her illness. We do not even know her proper name. It is sometimes assumed by readers, particularly those who live in Norwich, that the name "Julian" was indeed her own, and even that a little church on Roen Road, called St. Julian's, was named for her. In fact, however, "Dame Ieylan" (as she was known to her contemporaries) was undoubtedly so called after the church, whose patron saint has not been identified with certainty among the many "St. Julian's" who qualify.¹¹ In a cell adjacent to St. Julian's, or perhaps

shewed that this book should be completed otherwise than at its first writing." There is no indication that Julian wrote the chapter headings herself; more probably they are the work of a scribe, since they do not appear in the Paris MS (Walsh, p. vii). In any case the heading represents the way in which Julian's chapter was understood at an early date, and may show a first-hand knowledge of the way in which her work had progressed.

10 In Ch. 86 (p. 309) Julian says it was "fifteen years after, and more" before she understood the meaning of the Revelations as a whole. But in Ch. 51 (p. 135) she tells us that she did not understand the central "shewing"--the parable of the Lord and servant--until "twenty years after the time of the shewing, save three months".

11 The following account is given in an unsigned newspaper article, included in Tillett, Edward A., St. Peter Southgate, St. Ethelred and St. Julian Norwich, (manuscript and newspaper clippings), c. 1896 (in the Coleman and Rye Libraries of Local History, Norwich), p. 403:

'There are no less [sic] than ten saints named Julian in Alban Butler's "Lives of the Saints", the chief of them being St. Julian Hospitator,

attached to it, Julian lived for the rest of her life, following the visions, as an anchoress.

An anchoress (the masculine is anchorite) was a kind of recluse who spent her life within the confines of one little house, or sometimes, a single cell. The name comes from the Greek word anachoreo, to retire; for the anchoress was said to have retired from ordinary life, to be "dead" to the world. Julian's title "Dame" ("Domina" in Middle English) does not imply nobility, but was simply

the patron of hospitality. Butler, who lived some time in Norwich, and was contemporary with Blomefield, writing of St. Julian, first Bishop of Mans, says: --"He was much honoured in France, and many churches built during the Norman succession in England, especially about the reign of Henry II (1154-1189), who was baptized at the church of St. Julian at Man, bear his name; one in particular at Norwich, which the people by mistake imagine to have been dedicated under the title of the Venerable Juliana, a Benedictine nun at Norwich, who died in the odour of sanctity but was never publicly invoked as a saint." Blomefield mentions that Nicholas Page was buried in the churchyard of St. Julian the king and Confessor, which says he shows /sic/ that it was not dedicated to St. Julian the Bishop, nor St. Julian the Virgin. We know of no Julian King and Confessor, and most likely the record which Blomefield copied was a mere blunder. The Rev. W. Hudson, "How Norwich Grew into Shape", p. 27, classes St. Julian as a Saxon or Danish Saint, but we cannot conceive why. Alban Butler seems likely to be correct.'

The confusion exists to the present day. Chambers, p. 16, writes:

'On 8th May, 1953, a chapel and shrine were dedicated by the Bishop of Norwich, who announced to his congregation:

Good people, I declare this restored Church to be dedicated henceforth to the glory of God, under the title of Saint Julian, Bishop and Confessor, and in thanksgiving for the life and work of Dame Julian of Norwich.'

The suggestion (above) that St. Julian, Hospitator, is correct is supported by the fact that the Church is built at Conisford, i.e. the "king's ford" on the Wensum river. The Hospitator would have been the patron saint for seafarers who unloaded cargo near the site of the church.

The title applied to anchoresses--rather like "sister" for a nun.¹² Sometimes, out of respect for her vocation or on the assumption that she might have been a nun, Julian is referred to as "Mother Julian"; however, little can be said about her life either before or after the visions, except that she lived at St. Julian's. It is a Saxon-Norman church on the Wensum River at Consiford (Saxon for "King's Ford")--then a village, now long since part of the city of Norwich.

That Julian was indeed an anchoress at St. Julian's has been firmly established through several sources, though the dates of her enclosure there, and of her death, are unknown. The first evidence is contained in one manuscript of the Revelations itself: The Shorter Version includes a Prologue, written by the scribe, which says that

Here is a vision shewn by the goodness of God to a devout woman whose name is Julian. She is a recluse at Norwich and is living yet in this year of our Lord 1413. (p. lviii, S.G.L.)

The second source, which identifies Julian with the church by the same name, consists of contemporary wills. In accordance with the custom, various amounts of money were left for Julian and for her servants, for her maintenance as an anchoress. At least three wills, and possibly more, are known to Julian.¹³ The earliest dates 1394, when Julian would have been fifty-one.

12 cf. Warrack, p. xxii. On the question whether the title domina, sometimes used for nuns, necessarily implies that Julian was a nun, see Tanner, Norman F., S.J., Popular Religion in Norwich with special reference to the evidence of wills, 1370-1532, unpublished D. Phil. thesis, Oxford University, 1973, pp. 120-121. Fr. Tanner points out that while Margery Kempe refers to Julian as "Dame", wills mentioning Julian inevitably omit the title. Harford, Warrack and others refer to Julian as "Lady", though there is no historical basis for the title in Julian's case except that it may have been applied to anchoresses regardless of their social rank.

13 For the following see ibid., pp. 116 ff; and Sayer, Frank Dale, "Who was Mother Juliana?", in Julian and her Norwich: Commemorative Essays and

It is generally assumed that she became an anchoress long before this time, but it is possible that she did not. In either case, the will dates from about the time that Julian wrote the Revelations in its longer form. Thereafter a number of wills refer to her. One, dated 1404, implies that her anchorhouse was attached to the church, referring to Juliane anchorite apud ecclesiam St. Juliane in Norwico. Included in this will is Julian's servant Sara. Another, in 1415, also mentions Julian's maid, as well as Alice "some-time her maid".

Thereafter the evidence of wills is less straightforward, and it has resulted in an interesting confusion over the approximate date of Julian's death. A will of 1423 implies an anchorite (male) at St. Julian's (incluso rather than inclusa), suggesting that our Julian was no longer alive. The gender could be in error, however, since in 1429 an anchoress "in the churchyard of St. Julian's" is specified once again. There is no way to know whether this was the same anchoress as our Julian, who would have been eighty by that time. The picture is further complicated by the advent of at least one other anchoress called "Julian", the Lady Julian Lampyt who lived less than a mile away at the village of Carrow.

At Carrow there was a Benedictine Priory, which in fact owned St. Julian's church and which would have made Julian's anchorhold available to her. At the priory the anchoress called Julian Lampyt appears to have been in

handbook to the Exhibition "Revelations of Divine Love", Julian of Norwich 1973 Celebration Committee, Norwich, 1973, Pp. 6-7. (The Handbook is available from the Colman and Rye Libraries for £ 1.00. (Hereafter referred to as Handbook).

residence from about 1426 until 1478;¹⁴ a number of wills therefore refer to the anchoress Julian at Carrow ("Carhoe"). Writers of wills may not always have been careful to distinguish between Carrow and Onisford; in any case, historians have not. The confusion of the two Julian's has resulted in the notion that the author of the Revelations lived until 1483, when she would have been 140 years old.¹⁵ The English historian Blomefield erred more conservatively, misreading MCCCCXIII (in the Prologue to the Shorter Version) to be MCCCCXLIII--making Julian only 99.¹⁶ It is probable, nevertheless, that Julian lived to be over seventy in her little anchorage at St. Julian's, as we shall see.

The third source of evidence for a Julian, anchoress at St. Julian's Norwich, is the memoirs of Julian's younger contemporary, Margery Kempe. In the only literary reference to Julian, apart from her own Revelations, Margery refers to (ch. 18 of her Book),¹⁷ a visit with the anchoress during a pilgrimage through the city of Norwich. Margery was a somewhat eccentric woman; but her account of Julian's conversation with her is clear, and the

14 These dates are given by Sayer, in Handbook p. 7. Cf. Warrack, p. xv: "In Carrow Abbey, by Walter Rye (privately printed, 1889), is given a list of Wills, in which the name of the Lady Julian Lampet frequently occurs as a legatee between the years 1427 (Will of Sir John Erpingham) and 1478 (Will of William Hallys). Comparing the Will of Hallys with that of Margaret Purdance, which was made in 1471 but not proved till 1483, and from which the name of Lady Julian Lampet as a legatee is stroked out, no doubt because of her death, we find evidence that this anchoress died between 1478 and 1483."

15 Loc. Sit. (Sayer and Warrack).

16 Tanner, op. cit., p. 337, n. 2.

17 The Book of Margery Kempe, trans. W. Butler-Bowden, Jonathan Cape, London, 1936. (Hereafter referred to as Book). See also The Book of Margery Kempe, ed. Sanford Meech and Hope Emily Allen, Early English Text Society (Humphrey Milford), London, 1940. (Hereafter referred to as Meech and Allen).

nature of the anchoress' advice so resembles the Revelations in character that it was undoubtedly our Julian ("Dame Ieylan") whom Margery saw. The date cannot be fixed positively, but it was probably not much before about 1415.¹⁸

Margery travelled as a pilgrim through much of England, as well as to the Holy Land, and she does not indicate where in her travels she first heard of Julian. Her own home of King's Lynne, however, is about forty miles away from Norwich--not a great distance, but a sizeable walk nevertheless. That she came with the purpose of seeing Julian, if indeed this was a major reason for her journey to Norwich, suggests that Julian had a certain following during her own lifetime, and may have been known generally to the pilgrims of Norfolk and East Anglia.

The nature of Julian's life as an anchoress may be surmised from what is known generally about the eremetical life of her time.¹⁹ An anchoress differed from a hermit in that she did not wander from place to place; and from

18 Margery does not give the date, but it is generally thought to have been when Julian was upwards of seventy years of age (cf. Chambers, p. 28). Tanner, op. cit. p. 337, gives the year as 1413, though no reason is given for fixing this date. A rough means of reckoning seems to be as follows:

Margery's Book was written in 1436, "twenty years and more" from the time that she ceased to be an ordinary housewife (the "preface", p. 21); hence her conversion was not much before 1416. In fact her trip to Rome can be dated to 1415, when she was present for the confirmation of St. Bridget's canonisation in that year (ch. 39; cf. Butler-Bowden's "Chronology", p. 378). The trip to Norwich, however, was not part of the same journey, though it must have been after her conversion. We are told that this trip was made "while this creature was bearing children" (ch. 17, p. 67), therefore probably before she began her extensive travels. If we are correct in assuming that Margery went to Norwich before her pilgrimage to Rome, it follows that she visited Julian before 1415. (But cf. Meech and Allen, p. xlix. Meech dates the visit after the Rome journey, to May, 1415). Julian would have been 72 in that year.

19 "Eremetical" is the general term used to refer to anchorites, hermits, and ascetics who withdraw from society for the purpose of a contemplative life; from Gk. erēmia, solitude, desert. A classic text on the English eremetical life, from which much of the following material is drawn, is by Clay, Rotha Mary, The Hermits and Anchorites of England, Methuen and Co., London, 1914, pp. 73 ff. and passim.

a total recluse--in that she did not seclude herself totally from the world, even though she remained for the most part in her cell or anchorhold. Visitors were allowed to talk with her, within reason and within the schedule of her prescribed devotions. An important function of the anchoress, therefore, was to be available as a counsellor or a quiet listener who was not harried by the usual cares of the world. She spent the majority of her time, however, alone in her room, being occupied with prayer and with various kinds of handwork.

It is possible that Julian began something of a trend in Norfolk by her profession as an anchoress, though the City of Norwich was already an important site for the eremetical life in former times. Research into wills has shown that more anchorites, anchoresses and hermits lived there than in any other late medieval English town; and it is known that there were anchorites in the City in the thirteenth century, and early fourteenth.²⁰ There is no evidence, however, of anchorites or anchoresses there for the fifty years preceding Julian. Possibly the profession died out during one of the bouts of Plague in Norwich; but the reason for the gap is unknown. After Julian, the number increases again, so that as many as forty-five anchorites and hermits are seen to have lived in Norwich before the 1540's. In 1420, there were about eight anchorites or hermits in the city at one time.

The eremetical tradition in the Church, which so developed in Norfolk during the middle ages, is ancient, though the motives for withdrawing into an anchorage are probably not so readily appreciated today as they were in Julian's time. In the fourteenth century, to be an anchoress was looked upon as

²⁰ For the following see Tanner, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-121, 129 ff.

a proper vocation--perhaps the highest office available to a lay woman--and it was well regulated by the Church.²¹ One did not simply withdraw on his or her own, but did so with the permission of the bishop, and under strict rules. At her profession, an anchoress was "enclosed" in an elaborate ceremony, of which a main feature was a Requiem for the anchoress and other symbols of burial.²² From this time forward she regarded herself as "dead" to the world. This was truly symbolised when, in certain instances, ceremonies concluded as the bishop or his representative permanently walled up the door to the house so that the anchoress might never leave.

The rules by which an anchoress lived were carefully prescribed, and several such Rules--dating from before Julian's time in England, or contemporary with her on the Continent--have survived to the present. The best known English rule is the Ancrene Riwe, dating from the twelfth century.²³ It was

21 ' "The eremetical life", it has truly been said, "was once a career, and not the abdication of all careers." Recluses were therefore set apart for their vocation, whether they were regular or secular clergy, nuns, or men and women who had as yet taken no vows. A monk might become a hermit by permission of his abbot, but he could only be admitted to the order of an anchorite by the joint consent of his superior and the bishop. A lay person required the sanction of the bishop before taking either step.'--Clay, op. cit., p. 85.

22 ibid., pp. 94, gives details of the enclosure ceremonies in use at Julian's time.

23 Salu, M. B., trans., The Ancrene Riwe, Burns and Oates, London, 1955, esp. pp. 182 ff. (Hereafter referred to as Riwe). Chambers, p. 37, assigns authorship of the Riwe to one Richard Poore, Bishop of Salisbury from 1217-1229. This identification had already been challenged in a paper by Miss Hope Emily Allen, as Chambers concedes in a footnote. Dom Gerard Sitwell, in his Introduction to Miss Salu's edition, p. ix, n. 1, remarks that attempts to identify the author of the Riwe have not been successful. Another Rule cited at length by Miss Clay (op. cit., pp. 96 ff.) is that by Aelred of Rievaulx, from the twelfth century.

composed by an anonymous parson for three sisters who entered the eremitical life together, and stipulates the manner of dress, food, worship, manners, and handwork that an anchoress was to follow. It became something of a handbook, and evidently remained the chief guide for anchoresses even after Julian's time. According to the Riwle, and other sources, Julian would have lived an austere life: Remaining more or less in a single room, she ate no meat (unless she was very ill), and had her provision of pottage, fermity ("furmenty"--a spiced porridge of grain and milk), and beer once a day at mid-day. On Wednesday, Friday and Saturday she had only Lenten portions (i.e. a smaller and simpler meal); and during Lent she was to eat only bread and water on Fridays, the meal waiting until after Vespers at 6:00.

On Fridays, the anchoress was not to speak--though normally there was little opportunity for her to speak to anyone anyway, except for any servants she might have to prepare her food. Clothing was simple and rough:--either white or black, of the coarsest material, with coarse underwear. She was to wear a wimple--the ordinary medieval head-covering for a woman, which covered the chest and shoulders--or else a cap and veil. On the other hand, she was not to indulge in ascetical practices that were too harsh, or which might damage her health. She is advised to wear shoes, and a pilch (a thick wrap of animal skins) to keep herself warm in winter.

The chief occupation of an anchoress was prayer. The first part of the Riwle outlines an anchoress' daily devotions at some length, giving the prayers in Latin but also translating them, evidently for those who would not understand what they were saying otherwise. The anchoress was allowed time for personal devotions; but her principal form of prayer consisted of the Office, which occupied much of the day. It includes an Office of the Virgin, an

Office of the Dead, a Commendation, the seven Penitential Psalms, the fifteen Gradual Psalms, a litany, the "hours" of the Holy Ghost; numerous Paternosters; prayers to be said during Mass (assuming there was a church adjacent to the anchoress' cell); Cruces, i.e. devotional prayers in honour of the cross; the so-called "Five Joys of Mary" consisting of the Magnificat plus four psalms: and certain night prayers.²⁴ To assist her in all this, the anchoress--if she could read--might have a small prayer-book, or "book of hours", in which the prayers were written out for her.

The type of house in which Julian lived is not precisely known. A small cell attached to St. Julian's has been rebuilt on the site of an earlier foundation, which may or may not indicate the size of Julian's actual anchorhold.²⁵ Sometimes the anchoress "cell" actually consisted of several rooms,

²⁴ See Riwle, Part I (Pp. 7 ff) and Dom Sitwell's Introduction, Pp. xxi ff. The Seven Penitential Psalms are Vulgate 6, 31, 37, 50, 101, 129 and 142; the Joys of Our Lady are the Magnificat, plus Psalms 119, 118-third part, 122 and 125 (Vulgate). Most of the Office would have been said in Latin, either by memory or with the aid of a Book of Hours. However, the Riwle provides for the use of Aves and Paternosters in lieu of certain prayers, if the anchoress could not read or did not know them by heart.

²⁵ On June 27, 1942, the site was destroyed by bombs, sustaining a direct hit (cf. Chambers, p. 15). Even before the bombing, however, only the approximate site of Julian's cell was known, having been marked by a stone plaque on the south-east corner of the building. The cell itself was presumably destroyed during the Dissolution. The present room was rebuilt to incorporate a corner-stone which was discovered just outside the church wall adjacent to the church, and which is now visible inside the room several inches above the present floor level. The pre-war appearance of the Saxon and Norman church, with its distinctive tower, is described by Parker, I.H., "Architectural Notes of the Churches and Other Buildings in the City and Neighborhood of Norwich", in History and Antiquities of Norfolk and the City of Norwich, Archeological Institute, London, 1851, p. 166:

'St. Julian--A small plain church of mixed styles with aisles; the walls Norman. The west tower is round with a good Norman arch, having shafts with Norman caps and boses. The arch is deeply recessed, slightly pointed,

or even a small house, in order to house servants and to entertain. Some Rules specify an enclosed garden to surround the house,²⁶ and the Riwle suggests (by prohibiting it) that anchoresses sometimes kept cows as a source of income--which, it is to be noted, would cause problems if the cows ever got loose. Entertaining in the house is prohibited in the Riwle, however, except for the occasional female guest, under unusual circumstances. Normally, the anchoress was to stay alone in her one room, or parlour, furnished only with a bed, an altar, and little else. There were usually only two windows: one which opened outdoors, and one (called a "squint", or "hagioscope") which looked onto the adjoining church, providing a view of the altar. The window facing outwards was to be covered with a thick curtain of white and black cloth, in three layers--a layer of white sandwiched between two of black. A cross-shape was cut out of the two outer layers, allowing sunlight to filter into the room in the shape of a cross.²⁷ Through this window the

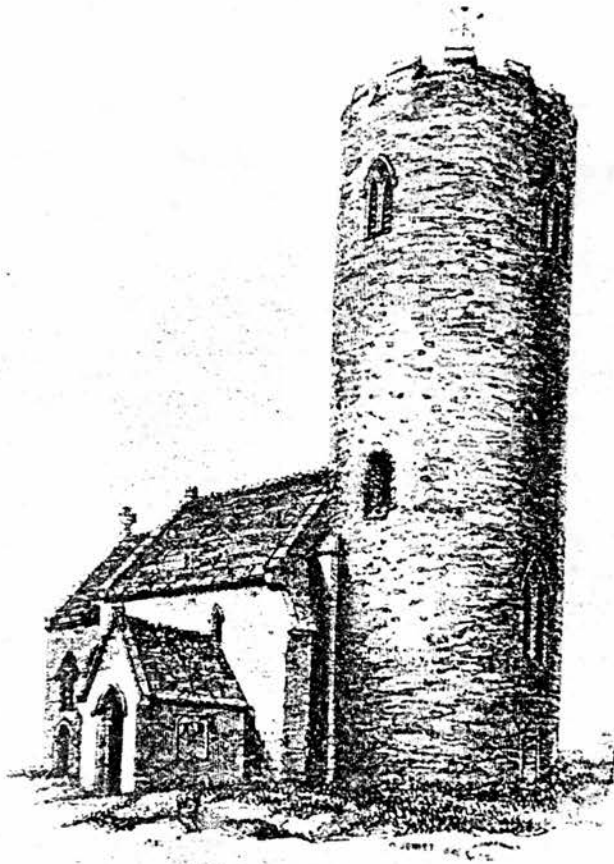
with a small Norman Loop window in the thickness of the wall, splayed inside and out. This tower is considered by some as Saxon. The other windows are Decorated and Perpendicular insertions. The south doorway is plain Norman. The font is good Perpendicular, octagonal, cup-shaped, and panelled, with angels in square panels. The north doorway and porch are Decorated."

See also Flood, H.R., St. Julian's Church Norwich and Dame Julian, Wherry Press, Norwich, 1936; and newspaper clippings in Tillet, op. cit., from which the illustration below is taken. The tower has not been restored to its full height since the bombing.

26 Handbook, op cit., p. 19.

27 This seems to be the proper interpretation of the Riwle, Part II. The Riwle regards windows as dangerous, insofar as they might provide the opportunity for lust. Therefore they were to be "small and narrow", and kept securely fastened. Warrack (p. xiii) indicates that there were often three windows, one to an adjoining room used by servants or guests (called the "house window"; see Riwle, p. 30).

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anchoress could speak with visitors, by drawing back her curtain. Her other window was covered with a shutter, and was to be used only for communion and the anchoress' own attention to the Mass.

Because the vocation of anchoress constituted its own "order", it was open both to laywomen as well as to nuns of the regular Orders. It has been suggested, however, that Julian was a nun of the Benedictine Order before she became an anchoress.²⁸ The implication has even been made that we know her Christian name, as one of eight nuns who were at Carrow about the time of Julian's visions--assuming that Julian renamed herself after the Church where she became an anchoress.²⁹ The grounds for the suggestion are two-fold: First, the anchorhold at St. Julian's, Conisford, was owned by Carrow abbey. It would not have been unusual, therefore, for a nun of the abbey to enclose herself there upon taking the vows of an anchoress. Second, Julian's only extra-Biblical quotation in the Revelations is from St. Gregory's Life of St. Benedict--a book which, presumeably, would have been familiar to a Benedictine.³⁰

Neither of these facts is conclusive evidence, however, that Julian was a nun at Carrow. First, we noted that contemporary with Julian, but entering

28 Warrack, p. xxii. Hudleston, p. xiii, mentions that he is aware of the suggestion, and finds it incompatible with Julian's presumed illiteracy. Molinari, op. cit., p. 8, implies that Hudleston first made the suggestion himself, and finds fault with Hudleston for it--although Molinari concludes that there is a Benedictine outlook in the Revelations, even if Julian were not a nun.

29 By Jewson, Charles B., People of Medieval Norwich, Jarrold and Sons Ltd., Norwich, c. 1956, p. 58

30 The quotation occurs in the Shorter Version, Ch. V (SGL p. 13), as follows:

"...for to a soul that sees the Maker of all things, all that is made seemeth full little".

her profession at a later date, was the anchoress Julian Lampyt at Carrow. It is possible that this latter Julian was, indeed, a nun at the Priory where she remained upon taking her vows. If so, it is curious that our own Julian did not exercise the same prerogative at an earlier date, rather than moving to the more distant site--particularly when there had been no anchoress in Norwich for fifty years. One commentator suggests that Julian chose the site because it was named for her patron saint--supposing that her Christian name was already "Julian"--and that she thereupon obtained the necessary permission from the priory to use its church as an anchorhold.³¹ More likely, Julian was so called after the church where she lived. But in any case, it is at least possible that the church was let or loaned to her by the priory; and there are no records to indicate a link between Julian and Carrow abbey, or between her and any Order of nuns in the city.

Second, the quotation from St. Gregory cannot be regarded as significant. Julian does not acknowledge her source in the text; the quotation is quite short, consisting of only part of one sentence; and it is given in English, not in Latin. These points suggest that Julian knew the passage in translation, not from St. Gregory's work itself, and perhaps that she knew it only from the store of common knowledge of her time. She never mentions St. Gregory, and may not have even been aware of her source. A nodding acquaintance with Gregory's Life, or its contents, would not in any case be confined to the Benedictines.³²

31 Pepler, Conrad, O.P., The English Religious Heritage, Blackfriars, London, 1958, p. 308.

32 Gregory was considered one of the "four doctors" of the ^{WESTERN} Church, along with Jerome, Ambrose, and Augustine. They are referred to by Julian's

There is, on the other hand, sufficient evidence in the Revelations itself, particularly in the Shorter Version, to conclude that Julian could not have been an anchoress at the time of her visions, and may not have been a nun. Negative evidence exists in the fact that Julian never refers to an Order, a convent, a prioress, a Rule, or any of the things we would expect from a nun as opposed to a laywoman. On the contrary, she continually refers to her "even-christians"--implying, in the parlance of her time, that she was a laywoman writing for layfolk, rather than a nun writing for other contemplatives. In the Shorter Version, furthermore, the circumstances of Julian's illness are described in more detail: combining the two Versions, we see at Julian's bedside, at one time or another, her mother, her curate and his acolyte, a "religious", and several unnamed women with whom Julian converses freely during the course of the visions.³³ These observations eliminate the possibility that Julian was an anchoress before her illness. It is not known whether her mother would have been permitted into a convent, even in the circumstance of Julian's illness, but it does not seem likely. The possibility that Julian became a nun immediately following the visions, and only later became an anchoress, is not suggested by the text or by any records to that effect; and it would seem that in the event, either Julian or one of the scribes would have mentioned the fact--since the Shorter Version would (presumably) have been composed during her time in the abbey. More likely,

contemporary William Langland, in Piers the Ploughman; and are mentioned in other contemporary works. Cf. Piers the Ploughman, trans. J. F. Goodridge, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1966 (2nd Ed.), pp. 107 and 282, n. 13.

33 The Shorter Version, Ch. II (SGL, pp. 4 ff.), "They who were with me..." etc.; Ch. X (SGL, p. 29). In the Longer Version see Ch. 3 (p. 49), Ch. 8 (p. 60), Ch. 66-67 (pp. 176-178), etc.

Julian became an anchoress following the extraordinary experience of her visions--the logical and accepted thing for a woman to do, when she had been blessed in such a measure by the grace of God.

An "Unlettered" Theologian

Because so little can be said with certainty about Julian, a major part of the literature about her consists of speculation--about her background, her style of life, and so on. An important subject for speculation has been Julian's education, or lack of it. Obviously, this will be an important point when we evaluate the possible influences on her theology. It is possible, and even likely, that Julian--the first woman to write a book in the English language, who produced a beautiful piece of English prose and also a notable theology--was illiterate.

It has been argued that whether or not Julian was actually a nun at Carrow, she was educated there.³⁴ The Benedictines had a convent school at Carrow, and it is known that this school catered to girls of noble families, or of the wealthy merchant class.³⁵ Despite the official attitude of the Church, that all girls should have equal opportunity to enter the convents--the novices were evidently recruited from well-to-do families, providing the convent with a suitable dowry with each admission. Conrad Pepler, O.P., has drawn a connection between these facts, and Julian's profession as an anchoress, to conclude that "...it is likely that she was Benedictine trained in her early years. She was probably well-to-do, her family being able to provide for her anchorhold..."³⁶

³⁴ Cf. Chambers, p. 27.

³⁵ Power, Eileen, Medieval English Nunneries c. 1275 to 1535, Cambridge University Press, 1922, pp. 12, 261 ff., 268.

³⁶ Pepler, op. cit., p. 308

That Julian came from a wealthy family cannot be deduced simply from the fact that she was an anchoress. We note from the evidence of wills for example, that she was not considered too wealthy to have gotten by without benefices. Neither do we know where she might have been educated, because we do not know where she lived before her profession at St. Julian's Church--not even if she came from Norfolk. Attempts to deduce her geographical origin on the basis of the text itself have not proved particularly conclusive.³⁷ But even if she were from Norwich, and even if she were from a high social background and attended the Benedictine school at Carrow, there is little that we can say with certainty regarding the education she might have received there.

We may begin with the evidence of Julian's Revelations itself. The fact that Julian composed the book is not, surprisingly, evidence that she had received an education, whether at Carrow or elsewhere. It is well known, for example, that St. Catherine of Siena was illiterate--though she is known best for her letters, and her influence even on contemporaries who were literate. It is generally accepted, too, that Margery Kempe could neither read nor write, largely on the grounds that she tells us so. In the Introduction to her Book, she describes the difficulties she encountered in locating anyone who could write down her memoirs for her. We know that she did not know Latin, because

37 Some of these are mentioned by Walsh, p. 1 (e.g. that she was born "in the East Riding of Yorkshire, between Beverley and the sea") but scarcely bear investigation (cf. AMR, p.xi). The text itself gives absolutely no clue as to Julian's origin, except for the fact that she wrote in English, which Walters (p. 19) takes to be "a blend of East Anglian and Northern dialects." For a fanciful interpretation of textual detail, however, see Flood, op. cit.

she was unable to communicate in that language during her travels.³⁸ Nevertheless, Margery is what we would call "well-read"--drawing from various elements of dogmatic theology of the Church in her book, and citing the Bible, "Saint Bride's Book (the Revelations of St. Bridget of Sweden), "Hylton's Book" (probably the Scale of Perfection, by Julian's contemporary Walter Hilton), "Bonaventure, Stimulus Amoris, Incendium Amoris, and such others".³⁹ She knew these works, however, only because her priest read them to her, over a period of "seven or eight years".

The Revelations also suggests an illiterate author. There is, for example, the heading of one of the manuscripts which reads, rather bluntly, "Revelations to one who could not read a letter, Anno Dom. 1373."⁴⁰ This heading, which has been attributed to an early scribe, may or may not reflect Julian's state when she actually composed the Revelations some twenty years after her original "shewings" in 1373. In any case, it is consistent with her own assertion, in Ch. 2 of the Longer Version, that she "cowde no letter".⁴¹

³⁸ Margery was able to quote from the Psalter in Latin, as she tells us in Book I, Ch. 6 (Book, p. 323); and in Bk. I, Ch. 51, she interprets for a clerk the meaning of Crescite et multiplicamini, (p. 181). On the other hand, she tells us quite plainly that she "knew no other language but English" (Bk. I, Ch. 33, p. 127), and could not understand Latin when spoken to her (Bk. I, Ch. 47, p. 167). She was able to make confession while in Rome only by a miracle--the priest understanding her English despite his ignorance of the language--because she could not make confession in Latin (cf. also Ch. 40, pp. 144-145).

³⁹ Book, Ch. 58, pp. 215-216.

⁴⁰ British Museum Sloane MS 2499. Included in the Warrack edition, p. 204.

⁴¹ The words are variously rendered; Cf. Walsh, p. 47: "a simple unlearned creature"; Chambers, p. 81, "a simple creature who was no scholar", etc.

A similar statement occurs in the Shorter Version, Ch. VI, that she was "unlettered".⁴² These statements have been variously interpreted by modern scholars, sometimes to mean rather less than they might.

It is possible that Julian could not read or write a letter, and never learned. It is also logically possible that she learned to read sometime after her visions, but before she composed the Revelations; or that she could read, but could not read (or perhaps speak) Church Latin. It has been pointed out that the Latin term illiteratus^t was used at the time to mean "knowing no Latin"; and the suggestion is that Julian's word "unlettered" would be the literal English equivalent of the term.⁴³ Still another possibility is that she (and perhaps Margery Kempe as well) could read, but could not write--a phenomenon which would not have been unusual in her day, because English was only just emerging as a written language, and spelling and grammar would not be standardized for some time. It has also been suggested that Julian's statement about herself is no more than a literary convention, and means very little with regard to her ability to read theological works that might have been available to her, at least in English.⁴⁴ As for the scribe, it is just possible that enthusiasm led him to a miraculous interpretation of Julian's apparent theological knowledge, and her subsequent composition of the Revelations.

42. SGL. P. 17

43 Colledge, Eric, The Medieval Mystics of England, John Murray, London, 1961, p. 84.

44 So Sayer, in Handbook, p. 7: "Julian's assertion that she was unlearned may in part spring from her diffidence as a female in expressing theological opinions. Had not the first woman brought disaster to the human race through untimely utterance? Moreover such disclaimers of learning were a literary convention of her period. Even Chaucer... made similar statements."

Historical evidence regarding education in Julian's day is significant, but not conclusive. In a thorough study of medieval nunneries in England,⁴⁵ Eileen Power has demonstrated that convent schools varied considerably in quality, depending upon the level of education reached by the nuns themselves. However, it would never have been very great, particularly at Carrow. According to Miss Power, it was not a Benedictine ideal for women to know how to write, and it was not always necessary for them to know how to read. Schoolgirls who became novices evidently paid much to attend school, but the skills acquired there were not extensive. With regard to their teachers, Miss Power concludes:⁴⁶

These, then, were the educational attainments of the English nuns in the later middle ages: reading and singing the services of the Church, sometimes but not always writing, Latin very rarely after the thirteenth century, French very rarely after the fourteenth; needlework and embroidery; and perhaps that elementary knowledge of physic which was the possession of most ladies of their rank.

Whether a convent education would have equipped Julian to read theological textbooks is another matter; but probably she did not expect to write any:⁴⁷

Whether girls were taught to write, as well as to read, is far more doubtful. It is probable that the nuns did not always possess this accomplishment themselves, nor did sober medieval opinion consider it wholly desirable that girls should know how to write, on account of the general inferiority of their sex, and of a regrettable proclivity towards clandestine love letters. Still, writing may sometimes have formed part of the curriculum; there is no evidence either way.

She could not have chosen to read or to write in Latin, in any case, because it was not available to her: "Latin could not have been taught because...

⁴⁵ Power, *op. cit.*, pp. 237 ff. and *passim*.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 260.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

the nuns at this period did not know it themselves; but the children were probably taught the Credo, the Ave and the Pater Noster by rote."⁴⁸ Indeed, Julian mentions these in the Shorter Version of the Revelations (Ch. XIX), formed part of her daily devotions which were said from memory:

And unto this end we say: Pater Noster, Ave and Credo, with such devotion as God will give. (SGL, p. 55)

But we must conclude that, even if she were educated, "no-one has ever suggested that Julian was a Latin scholar, which would in itself have been in fourteenth-century England so extraordinary as not to have passed unremarked."⁴⁹

Another study, utilized by Miss Power, indicates that the opportunity for girls to learn to read in Julian's day was perhaps not so great as may be supposed. Margaret Deanesly, in her classic text on the emergence of the Lollard (English) Bible, suggests that few girls went to school:⁵⁰

The great majority of lay people were, of course, illiterate, and unable to read or write. This is sometimes obscured by medieval writers who deal with social life, and who speak of those of a single class as if that class alone existed...Thus most of the evidence as to the education of lay people, or their power of reading in after life, applies only to the upper social classes, a very small section of the whole population...The majority of lay people were small farmers, farm labourers, personal servants, members of great households, soldiers, and the handcraftsmen of the town: some, but not most of them, might go to a small local abc school as children, but they had no further acquaintance with books. There is almost no evidence that little girls attended the abc schools at all, though it is possible that in some cases they did so...

Thus the argument that Julian was educated at Carrow or elsewhere, even enough to read simple English, turns on the assumption that she belonged to an elite social class. At least two factors weigh against this assumption. First, we

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 276.

⁴⁹ Colledge, op cit. p. 85.

⁵⁰ Deanesly, Margaret, The Lollard Bible and Other Medieval Biblical Versions, Cambridge University Press, 1920, p. 206.

note that Julian chose to write in English, rather than in French, the language of the upper class. Possibly, French was no longer an option to her because it was not being taught in the schools. Second, however, it seems unlikely that if Julian were of the social class to have received an education-- if she were a Lady, for example--she would have remained anonymous. Unlike other prominent women of her time, we do not even know her name; and there is no record of her other than her book, the few wills which refer to her, and Margery Kempe's brief account of the visit to Norwich. We further observe, in passing, that the assumption requires Julian's phrase, "even-Christians", to refer only to the highest classes--which usage seems incompatible with her theology.

One phrase in the Revelations has, nevertheless, been adduced to show that Julian attended an abc school, or perhaps the convent school at Carrow. This is the statement in Ch. 51 in which Julian refers, indirectly, to the alphabet:⁵¹

Further, in this marvellous parable, I have teaching within me, as it were the beginning of an ABC, whereby I may have some understanding of our Lord's meaning. (p. 141)

A similar phrase occurs in Ch. 80 (p. 201). The argument is that if Julian knew the abc's, she must have known how to read. However, the same passage can be taken in the opposite sense. Julian may mean that her teaching is within her, the beginning: i.e., that she did not have an education in the ordinary sense, but obtained hers from the Lord. In any case, her language is figurative, and the fact that she mentions the abc's does not demonstrate

⁵¹ So Reynolds in SGL, p. xvii.

anything in itself. As we have seen, the term abc was used to refer to grammar schools, intended on the whole for boys; and we may assume that Julian knew the term, even if she did not attend such a school herself.

It has been suggested that Julian asked learned men in her acquaintance to bring books to her; or, if she could not read, to read them to her in the way that Margery Kempe had books read to her by her priest. In particular, the evidence cited for this is that Julian's cell was on the same street as an Augustinian friary, from which visitors might have read to her out of Augustine's works; that she was not very far from the abbey at Carrow, which must have had a library; that there were Dominicans nearby; and that Benedictines at the Cathedral priory had a large collection of books, and would have been eager to visit and to teach the anchoress.⁵² Once more, however, there are factors which mitigate the view that Julian was well educated in this manner.

First is Julian's vocation as an anchoress. While it is undoubtedly true that she had visitors, and spoke regularly with a confessor, it does not seem likely that she could have visited with a monk or a priest at such length that he could read whole books to her. If the Ancrene Riwe were observed on this point, visits would have been short, and formal; and a male religious would not have entered Julian's cell under any circumstances. Thus if a monk or friar, or Julian's confessor, read books to her, it may have been under arduous circumstances: through the window, perhaps with snow blanketing his cowl, struggling with the leaves of an oversize manuscript in the Norfolk wind. That Julian might have heard such colossal works as Augustine's de Trinitate

52 Ibid., p. xx., and Sayer in Handbook, p. 8.

or De Civitate Dei, or even the First Part of Thomas' Summa, in this fashion seems remarkable, particularly if her tutor took time to translate for her from the Latin. Something more than Margery's "eight years" would have been required, at least. It is possible that a woman read to her; or perhaps the rules were somewhat relaxed by Julian's time. We note that the same arguments would apply to the presence of an amanuensis for Julian's use; however, the copying of a manuscript would seem more likely to have received dispensation than habitual lessons from the Dominicans. More likely, Julian discussed the content of treatises with the learned men she may have known, rather than hearing the works themselves.

Second is the nature of the libraries to which Julian (through her friends) may have had access. Two things must be considered here: One is the paucity of books which would have been available from Carrow, even if Julian were a nun from the abbey. Miss Power and Miss Deanesly have demonstrated, from what is known about fourteenth-century libraries in general and Benedictine ones in particular, that a priory like Carrow would have had no more than a handful of books; and these would have been, for the most part, liturgical texts for use in community worship.⁵³ The other is the fact that, even if Julian had obtained books from an extensive library such as the one at the Cathedral, she could not have read them, because the majority would have been in Latin.

The third source of evidence is the text of the Revelations itself. We should note generally that Julian need not have been well-read, even in Margery Kempe's sense, to have composed the Revelations. Unlike Margery, she never

⁵³ Power, pp. 240 ff.; Deanesly, pp. 110-116.

cites a single contemporary theologian by name; nor does she quote from any theological works by name; nor does she refer to them even generally. In fact, she does not show a knowledge of theologians at all, except once: In the Longer Version, Ch. 80 (p. 201), she mentions the ministry of angels "as the theologians tell"--which may or may not indicate that she was thinking of a written source.⁵⁴ In this case, as elsewhere, it may be inferred that Julian shows a knowledge of Walter Hilton's Scale of Perfection; but she neither quotes from it nor clearly refers to it. She mentions saints, but not Bride (Bridget) whose own Revelations were known to Margery; nor does she refer to any of the saints as the author of a book. The only identified quotation in the book is the unacknowledged reference (which may have been unconscious) to St. Gregory. Nor does Julian seek to develop the thought of any other theologian, whether acknowledged or not. In a time when most prominent theologians tended to base their written work directly upon someone else's composition--usually not acknowledged--Julian's originality is noteworthy, and lends credence to her assertion that she was simply ignorant. Perhaps she knew in general what "the theologians tell", but she need not have read (or heard) it for herself. In the Revelations it is not her object to discuss what someone else has said, but to tell of the overwhelming Love of God, as she saw it in her visions. Her primary source, therefore, is the visions themselves--for which no formal education is required.

⁵⁴ The reference could be to Hilton's Scale; however, the "ministrations of the Holy Angels" is a common theme for medieval theologians, including St. Thomas. Julian may not even mean theologians here, but the fact that angels figure importantly in homilies, sermons, plays, etc. of the time. In the legend of St. Cecily, it is an angel who converts Cecilia's new husband--the kind of "ministration" to which Julian refers here. See below, p. 467.

Julian does, however, express her frustration at not being educated-- not because she does not know what to say, but because she does not know how to say it:

I am certain that he that beholds thus he shall be truly taught and mightily comforted if he needeth comfort. But God forbid that ye should say or take it thus, that I am a teacher, for I do not mean that, nor meant I ever so. For I am a woman, unlettered, feeble and frail. But I know well this that I say--I have it on the shewing of Him who is Sovereign Teacher--and truly charity urgeth me to tell you of it, for I would that God were known and my fellow-Christians helped (as I would be myself), to the more hating of sin and loving of God. Because I am a woman should I therefore believe that I ought not to tell you about the goodness of God since I saw at the same time that it is His will that it be known? (SGL, p. 17)

It has been suggested that here, she challenges an English tradition which prevented women from speaking out on theological matters.⁵⁵ Margery Kempe, for example, had to defend herself against the charge of acting as a "preacher", which accusation may have been tantamount to one of heresy.⁵⁶ But Julian's point is also that she has much to say, and little way to go about it. She could not write a Latin treatise, like Richard Rolle, nor a spiritual guide like Hilton's Scale. Margery Kempe's Book had not yet been produced, so there was no English precedent who, like St. Catherine of Siena, had published her experiences by dictating them. She could not pretend to be a theologian (a "teacher") because only men attended the universities. She could, however, speak of what she saw in her visions; and evidently, she did. It is significant, perhaps, that Julian always refers to "telling" us about her visions,

55 Reynolds, Edition of MS Sloane 2499, p. xxvii. Sr. Reynolds observes that Julian resembles Bridget of Sweden, Mechtild of Hackborn, and Catherine of Siena in daring to commit her visions to writing, though her work has "few obvious affinities" with theirs otherwise.

56 Ch. 52 of the Book (p. 189).

rather than to writing about them.

A final point regarding the text itself may be explored. The Revelations is a coherent and beautifully developed book, which expounds the content of Julian's sixteen visions in some detail, one after another. Could such a work have been composed by dictation--and is there any evidence in the text which would clearly indicate that it was, or was not? Repetition of whole passages, or segments out of sequence, might indicate dictation; Margery tells us, for example, that she has not narrated all events in their proper order, and she tends to "wander" in her thought. Cross-references in the text, on the other hand, would indicate editing of the text, or perhaps that Julian worked with a written text in front of her.

At the present time there is no sizeable study which has dealt exclusively with Julian's prose style in the Revelations, or its structure. A study has been produced, however, on the style of Margery Kempe and Julian together, concentrating mainly on the Book.⁵⁷ In this short study, Robert Stone assesses the question of Margery Kempe's literacy with relation to the text, and points out that it would be virtually impossible to tell how much of the book was produced by Margery, and how much might have been added by an editor--by her own amanuensis, for example. The Introduction tells us that Margery's scribe was indeed involved in a certain amount of editing, which consisted primarily of deciphering the handwriting of her earlier edition. Stone concludes on the other hand, that Margery's own personality seems to be reflected throughout the whole text. This would indicate that she supervised

57 Stone, Robert Karl, Middle English Prose Style: Margery Kempe and Julian of Norwich, Mouton, The Hague, 1970, pp. 19-22.

the work closely, so that we have more or less her own words. Finally, he argues that it is not in spite of her illiteracy, but because of it, that Margery may have been able to recall enough events in her life, accurately and with detail, to write a book from memory: in an age which relied more upon memory than upon writing skill, her ability to remember would be more highly developed than would ours today. Similar arguments may be applied to Julian and to her Revelations.

Turning to Julian's text, we note that occasionally she repeats herself, evidently unintentionally. In Ch. 5 (p. 53), for example, she writes of her vision of the "hazelnut":

for it seemed as though it might suddenly fade away to nothing...
and in the next paragraph, she tells us again;

...it seemed as though it would fade away to nothing, it was so small.

This particular example has the ring of conversation about it, rather than of prose composition; and her repetition here is easily distinguished from the instances in which words or short phrases are repeated for stylistic effect. That she may have been speaking seems to be borne out further along in the same chapter, where Julian appears to move from dictation into actual prayer with the words, "God, of thy goodness, give me thyself..." (p. 54). Thus it would seem that interruptions in her dictation--such as this prayer, or the regular Hours--caused her to forget what she had already said. This would be especially easy if Julian had no written text in front of her. Other examples of more lengthy repetitions are scattered throughout the Revelations. In Ch. 27 (p. 91), for example, she repeats portions of Ch. 5 (p. 53) regarding the subject of asceticism ("naughting"). Ch. 36 (p. 105) similarly repeats a section of Ch. 34 (p. 102) concerning God's secrets, and the nature of divine

revelation; Ch. 68 (p. 179) recapitulates Ch. 5 (p. 53) once more to say that the soul can find rest only in God.

On the other hand, there are several examples in the Revelations of cross-references, both forward and backward: In Ch. 59 (p. 161) Julian refers the reader to a passage which occurred much earlier, in Ch. 26 (p. 90). Here, as elsewhere, Julian does not refer us to a chapter number, but simply quotes from the passage which she has in mind:

As truly as God is our Father, so truly is God our Mother. And that shewed he in all, and especially in these sweet words where he saith "I it am"...(p. 161)

She then proceeds to paraphrase and greatly amplify the passage in Ch. 26. In another example, Julian gives us the number of the "shewing" of which she is thinking: In Ch. 31 (p. 96) she refers us once more to the same passage in Ch. 26, this way:

...This was plenteously seen in every shewing; and particularly in the twelfth, where he saith: "I it am that is Highest".

At other times, she simply uses the phrase, "as is aforesaid", or some equivalent: as, for example, in Ch. 36 (p. 106), and Ch. 55 (p. 153).

Since Julian does not refer to chapters, and seldom mentions "shewings" by number (but more generally refers to the content of what has been said before, sometimes quoting, but usually not word-for-word), we may assume that these references were achieved simply by a sound memory, and her intimate knowledge of the subject-matter. Forward references, however, are more difficult without the help of a text. In Ch. 17 (p. 75) Julian writes:

...This was shewed me for the bodily thirst; what was shewed for the ghostly thirst, I shall tell afterwards.

She does not specifically "tell afterwards" until much later, in Ch. 31 (p. 96). Again, in Ch. 55 (the Fourteenth Revelation) she refers to a passage which has

not yet appeared in the text:

And this was seen in the sixteenth shewing, where it saith: "The place that Jesus taketh in the soul, he shall never remove from it."
(p. 152)

The reference is to Ch. 68 (p. 178)--and she quotes it almost exactly. We note that she refers to the "sixteenth shewing" as something which has already been written, or was being written, when Julian (or an editor) inserted her remarks relating to it in Ch. 55. From these examples we may assume that some editing of the Revelations did take place; we cannot assume, however, that Julian did it by re-reading her own text, inserting the appropriate comments herself. It is possible that while dictating, she was in the habit of suddenly recalling earlier passages. She would then direct her scribe to locate them and to insert the appropriate remarks.

Thus the text of the Revelations does not demonstrate by itself either that Julian wrote it down personally, re-reading and editing her own text; or that she wrote it with the help of a scribe, but could read it; or that she dictated it all, and could neither read it nor (therefore) edit it from a written text. But we can say that, if Julian were permitted the services of a scribe, it would have been possible for her to compose the book without being able to read; and that the weight of historical evidence is against her having had an education of any but the simplest kind--if she were educated at all.

The Revelations in History

That Julian may have been uneducated in the modern sense does not mean that she was ignorant, either of the refinements of prose composition or of important theological issues which were being discussed in her day. Nor does it mean that she had no influence on her contemporaries, or that she did not borrow from them. It has proved difficult, however, to assess the significance

of the Revelations for Julian's own time because of the lack of references to it in literature. This seems puzzling in light of Julian's originality, and the importance of the Revelations historically as an early English prose composition.

The Revelations is now recognized as one of the best examples of Middle English prose that we have. Julian has been described as the "first real English woman of letters", and the phrase is often quoted.⁵⁸ Certainly she was the first woman to write anything of note in the English language, and her style is outstanding even in an age which produced several writers whose works are still appreciated today. The fact that she composed the Revelations when there was little precedent in the language lends freshness to her work, and remarkable prose style which reflects an ear used to rhyme and to song. Nevertheless, the Revelations does not seem to have been widely noticed, either in its own time or in the centuries following. The reason, perhaps, is the richness of the setting into which it was born.

Julian wrote at a time when Middle English prose and poetry was coming into its own, and English mystical theology had reached its height. The first English translations of the Psalter, together with numerous English lyrics, were produced by Richard Rolle (d. 1349) only a short time before Julian's birth, and were already popular.⁵⁹ Among the many new English works which were being read during her lifetime or shortly thereafter were Rolle's Psalms

58 So Evelyn Underhill in the Cambridge Medieval History, ed. Tanner, et. al., Cambridge University Press, 1949, Vol. VII, p. 807; quoted by Reynolds in SGL, p. xxii, and elsewhere.

59 For the importance of Rolle's rhymed Psalms as Biblical translation, see Deanesly, op. cit., p. 231.

and Lyrics, William Langland's Piers the Ploughman (c. 1370); Walter Hilton's Scale (Hilton d. 1395) and his translation of Stimulus Amoris (the Goad of Love--a synthesis of European mystical writings which, at the time, were wrongly attributed to Bonaventure); Chaucer's Canterbury Tales (c. 1390); Sir Gawain and Green Knight; Wyclif's unauthorised English Bibles (the first in 1381); a variety of devotional works;⁶⁰ and the anonymous Cloud of Unknowing, composed during the latter half of the century. The latter, along with the translation, Deonise Hid Diuinite and several related works by the same author, was to prove very influential in the theological outlook of Julian's English contemporaries.

The relationship between the style of Julian's Revelations and that of lyrics and devotional works contemporary with her has only recently come under study. One of Julian's recent editors, Sr. Anna Maria Reynolds, was first to study at any length the elements of Julian's syntax and imagery, in her thesis written in 1956.⁶¹ She notes Julian's use of concrete images; of synonymous phrases and poetic repetition, of prose rhythm and alliteration, and other poetic devices--all of which are found in other works of the time, but seldom with the beauty and originality of Julian's work. In another paper, Sr. Reynolds has drawn attention to Julian's use of "courtesy", a concept found in

⁶⁰ These include The Prymer or Lay Folks' Prayer Book (available in an Early English Text Society edition, ed. Henry Littlehales, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co. Ltd., London, 1895); The Chastising of God's Children and the Treatise of Perfection of the Sons of God (also available, in an edition by Joyce Bazire and Eric Colledge, Oxford University Press, 1957); and The Prick of Conscience, as well as a number of lesser-known and smaller works for personal devotion.

⁶¹ Referred to throughout as AMR. See also SGL, pp. xvi-xxxii; and "Some Literary Influences in the Revelations of Julian of Norwich", Trinity and All Saints' Colleges, Horsforth, Leeds, 1973 (reprinted from Leeds Studies in English and Kindred Languages, Nos. 7 and 8, 1952).

the medieval romance (such as Roman de la Rose) and English courtly literature (e.g. Gawain and the Green Knight).⁶² This concept, which will figure importantly in her theology of the Love of God, is balanced by another from the opposite spectrum of life, that of "homeliness"—the peasant's concept of "being-at-home", or habitual dwelling.⁶³ Sr. Reynolds' findings have been amplified by Stone, in his study of Julian and of Margery Kempe; and by Sr. Mary Knowlton, writing on the possible influences of Julian and Richard Rolle on contemporary poetry.⁶⁴ All three cite examples of unparalleled beauty in the Revelations. At the same time, Julian's book is not considered to have been very important in shaping either the theology of her day, nor the lyrics and prose during or after her lifetime.⁶⁵

The limited influence of the Revelations historically is indicated in part by the small number of manuscripts which have survived; and by the fact that the Revelations is neither quoted nor referred to by Julian's contemporaries. That the Revelations was not widely copied has been taken to mean that there may have been several anchoresses, or perhaps female visionaries, contemporary with Julian, all living rather anonymous lives--so that her own

62 Reynolds, Anna Maria, C. P., "'Courtesy' and 'Homeliness' in the Revelations of Julian of Norwich", unpublished paper given for the Sixth Centenary Celebration of Julian's visions at Norwich Cathedral, May 8, 1973 (loaned by Fr. Michael McLean, St. Julian's, Norwich).

63 See below, p. 130 f. Allen finds scriptural authority for the immanence ("homeliness") of God in Richard Rolle's glosses on Ps. 10:4, 92:3, 131:14-15 (Meech and Allen, p. 257 n. 3/2).

64 Knowlton, Sr. Mary Arthur, The Influence of Richard Rolle and of Julian of Norwich on the Middle English Lyrics, Mouton, the Hague, 1973.

65 Ibid., p. 177.

"shewings" did not attract much attention at the time of their publication.⁶⁶ It is possible, on the other hand, that for some reason the Revelations simply were not published--perhaps because of Julian's poverty, or because of her seclusion. It is even possible that her writings were regarded as somehow unorthodox--as the product of heretics, for example--and so were suppressed.

The latter is suggested by the scribe's colophon at the end of one of the manuscripts.⁶⁷ In it, the scribe cautions the reader to "take all things together", lest he misinterpret the text in an heretical manner. Possibly Julian had already been accused of heresy. However, the Revelations is not mentioned in contemporary polemical works; and since Julian is not referred to in this regard (or at all) it seems unlikely that she had earned the reputation of an heretic. On the other hand, it may have been known that Julian would be sympathetic to a character such as Margery Kempe, whose own orthodoxy had been questioned. In any case, it is noteworthy that although Margery had heard of Julian herself, and visited the anchoress some time after the Longer Version of the Revelations would have been composed, she makes no mention of Julian's book. She refers only to the conversations which she had with the anchoress, in which the two discussed the authenticity of Margery's visions. Since Margery refers several times to Walter Hilton, Julian's contemporary, and to St. Bride, it seems logical that she would have quoted from the Revelations too, if she had known about it. That the book would not have been mentioned at all in their conversations seems unlikely--particularly since it is Julian's express purpose,

⁶⁶ Tanner, op. cit., p. 116.

⁶⁷ Sloane MS 2499 (Revelations p. 209).

in writing her Revelations, to make her visions known to "God's lovers" so far as possible.

As a mystical theologian, Julian was surrounded by a host of other notables, most of them well-educated, both in England and on the Continent. As a result it is easy to overlook her work as a theological achievement in her time, even if we appreciate its literary value. All the works we have noted so far are also theological works, in that they are concerned either with the contemplative life, or with the Church, at least to some extent. Chaucer and Langland tend to be polemical in their treatment of the Church, which had indeed fallen onto hard times; but the theological background to their writings is undeniable. The mystical writers who were contemporary with Julian in England are well-known today, as they were eminent in their own time. Hilton and the author of the Cloud are usually considered to be England's greatest mystical writers, and they made significant contributions to the spirituality of their own day.⁶⁸ In order to see Julian's relationship to these men, and to theological developments contemporary with her, it is helpful to broadly characterize the spiritual developments of her times.

We may think of Julian's age as witnessing two general movements in theology and personal piety. One is the deterioration of many elements of Church practice and belief, despite the fact that nearly every aspect of life was in some sense bound up with the Church. The other is a flowering of new piety, and of mystical writing, which occurred both in England and on the Continent

⁶⁸ See for example Colledge, op. cit., pp. 71-78, where the eminence of two men, along with some of their stylistic and theological differences are discussed; also Evelyn Underhill (ed.), The Scale of Perfection, John M. Watkins, London, 1948, p. xxi; Leo Sherley-Price (tr.), The Ladder of Perfection, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1957, p. xviii; etc.

in the late fourteenth, and early fifteenth, centuries. Both developments are reflected to some extent in the Revelations, although Julian does not discuss contemporary events except as they seem to have been reflected in her sixteen Revelations. We may begin with her relation to the Church, as an ordinary citizen in fourteenth-century England.

In Julian's England, it may be said, every social problem was also an ecclesiastical one--because every aspect of social life touched upon the Church in one way or another. This meant, for example, that in Norwich the Church, in the form of the Cathedral, dominated the architecture, and even governed time in the city, with its clock.⁶⁹ Guilds identified with patron saints, and pageants were held on the appropriate saints' days.⁷⁰ The guilds built their own churches, whose names still indicate the occupation of the parish laymen.⁷¹ Morality plays, passion plays and festivals were frequent events, and marked the seasons week by week. Priests, monks, nuns and friars

69 A "watch bell" rang in the morning to begin the day, and the commencement of the Hours was governed by this clock. See Healy, Sean, Town Life, B.T. Batsford Ltd., London, 1968; and n. 1, above.

70 A colourful account of the guilds' pageants will be found in Hudson, William, and J. C. Tingey, The Records of the City of Norwich, 1910, pp. 230 ff. Each guild or group of guilds had its own play or exhibit, e.g. "glasiers, Steyners, Screueners, Parchemyners, Carpenters, Gravours, Carvers, Cole-makers, Whelewrites" together exhibited a "Helle Carte", or movable stage on which eternal judgement was portrayed. "Tanners, Coryours, Cordwaners" depicted "Moises and Aron w^t the children of Israel and Pharo w^t his Knyghtes"; etc.

71 It is assumed by local residents that the church next to St. Julian's in Norwich, called St. Peter's Parmentergate, was so named because it was frequented by parmenters, i.e. makers of parchment, or tanners. See also Flindall, Roy P., "The Lady Julian and her City: a meditation on religion and society", in Handbook, pp. 12-13: "In spite of the fact that the guilds were industrial and commercial fraternities, they found their natural focus in the parish church where they often maintained a priest to say mass and, at the same time, provided the altar requisites." (p. 12)

were ever-present, a constant reminder of the contemplative life which was supposed to be the ideal for all men. In Norwich during Julian's day there were Dominicans (called Blackfriars) at the Cathedral, Franciscans (Greyfriars), Benedictines, Carmelites (White Friars), and Augustinians, each with their own friary. The churches were prolific: Fifty-six within the city walls alone, more in the surrounding county.⁷² The arts still depicted only Christian subjects--usually elements of the life of Christ, or of the saints--and were used to instruct the laity about the faith.

At the same time, the authority of the Church was badly eroded during the fourteenth Century. First came the "Babylonian" captivity in France: from 1305 (with the election of Clement V) to 1377 the Pope was virtually a puppet of the French court, remaining after 1309 at Avignon. Gregory XI removed the papacy back to Rome in 1377, but died shortly thereafter. The election of Urban VI, an Italian, was followed by the Great Schism: from 1378 to 1409 there were two popes at once, one in France and one in Rome; and from 1409 to 1414 there were three, when the Council of Pisa attempted to depose the rival popes and to begin all over again. Obviously the questions of Papal authority vs. secular authority, and of which pope to recognize, were difficult ones spiritually as well as politically. England, because of her enmity with France, recognized Urban VI; but the whole affair was ridiculed both by popular writers such as Chaucer and Langland, and by theologians like Ockham and Wyclif.

An associated ill was the decline of the Orders, particularly the mendicant ones, both in moral standards and in the fulfillment of their vows as

72 Handbook, pp. 27 and accompanying map (page unnumbered).

ascetics and contemplatives.⁷³ The Franciscans, who had set an impressively high standard for themselves in their first impact upon England in the century before, provide the most obvious example. At first, they were highly regarded for their humility, devotion and genuine poverty. But schism had erupted within the Order, between those who advocated strict poverty and those who did not. In addition, many English Grey Friars had made a bad name for themselves, by Julian's day, owing in part to their failure to live up to their earlier standards, and in part to the squabbles that inevitably arose between the mendicants and the parish clergy wherever the friars went. Formerly, the friars had worked for their living in fields or shops; now they begged. But begging had begun to be a nuisance. The alternative practice, of making one's way through preaching, taking confessions and making absolutions, and burying, was perhaps even more annoying. Friars who made money through these practices drew from the income of the parish priest, and so incurred their jealousy and wrath. Conflict reached such a pitch by the end of the fourteenth century that the Franciscans were accused, along with others, of provoking the Peasants' Revolt in 1381, ostensibly because the Friars Minor preached against wealth and the ownership of property (thereby supporting the peasants), but at least in part because of the general complaint against mendicant friars.⁷⁴

73 For the following, particularly with reference to the Franciscans, see Bagley, John J., Life in Medieval England, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York 1960, pp. 82 ff; Moorman, John R. H., The Franciscans in England, Mowbrays, London, 1974; Knowles, Dom David, The Religious Orders in England, Vol. II, Cambridge University Press, 1955, pp. 61-73, 90-114 and passim; and Gwynn, Aubrey, S. J., The English Austin Friars in the Time of Wyclif, Oxford University Press, 1940, pp. 88-89 and passim.

74 Oman, Charles, The Great Revolt of 1381, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1969, p. 20.



In their increasing unpopularity the Franciscans were not alone. In Norwich, for example, the Benedictine monks came into conflict with the city folk over the construction of the cathedral--because its grounds infringed on Tombland, one of the City's open markets.⁷⁵ Langland, Wyclif and Chaucer are most eloquent when they are denouncing the monks and the friars of all the Orders. In general their attacks are upon the behaviour of their contemporaries, rather than upon the ideals of the Orders or the founders of them, such as St. Francis or St. Augustine; but criticism carried over to the whole ideal of the mendicant life. Meantime, there had always been problems between the Orders, and their different Rules. Monks were forever quarrelling with the friars, particularly when the friars drew crowds away from the churches by their preaching, or attempted to preach in the cathedrals without permission. Julian's contemporary, Adam Easton, the well-known preacher from the Cathedral priory in Norwich, is seen condemning friars who wish to preach in the Cathedral--and finally restraining them from doing so.⁷⁶ The Franciscans and the Dominicans, both popular in their early years in England, had originally disagreed over the question of education: Franciscans shunned books, while Dominicans were begun precisely as a teaching order. By Julian's time, however, the Franciscans had learned men too, as well as property; and now, they fought with the Dominicans over rights of ownership.⁷⁷ Julian does not refer to these problems directly; but her eloquent stress on unity in the Love of God (in ch. 37 of the Revelations, and underlying the whole book) must reflect her

75 "Tombland" = "Marketplace", not a graveyard, in M.E.

76 Tanner, op. cit., p. 112.

77 Bagley, op. cit., p. 83.

sensitivity to the tensions in the Church as she knew it.

If schism and quarrels brought about doubt in the sanctity of the Church, there was the added problem of heresy attacking the Faith. Several "heresies" of various kinds were prevalent in Julian's England, ranging from serious theological challenges to what were probably merely psychological aberrations, or forms of mass hysteria following the outbreak of the Plague.⁷⁸ Most important to us are the Lollards, who were beginning to be a significant social force about the time that Julian wrote her Revelations.

The term "lollard" has been assigned several derivations, and its origin, like that of the movement itself, may never be firmly fixed. Possibly the word stems from the Dutch lollen, to mumble--referring to the Lollard's proclivity towards lay-preaching or reciting scripture.⁷⁹ In general use, the term had come to be synonymous with "heretic"; but in particular it stood for

78 See Cambridge Medieval History, op. cit., Vol VII, pp. 86 and 789 ff.

Margaret Deanesly gives an exhaustive description of heresies contemporary with Julian in The History of the Medieval Church 590-1500, Methuen and Co. Ltd., London, 1925, pp. 221 ff. These included Averrhoists, Cathari and Albigeists, pantheists, Flagellants, the "Spiritual" Franciscans, Waldensians, Beghards (sometimes regarded as heretical), Brethren of the Free Spirit, and witches. Perhaps the most common intellectual "heresy" was the tendency towards fully-developed Neoplatonism, stressing the concept of man's inherent capacity to be divine. Julian will develop this concept, not in the sense that man is divine within himself, but in the orthodox sense of his inclusion into God, in Christ.

79 Deanesly, in The Lollard Bible, p. 70, n. 1, points out that this term, first applied to Waldensians who memorized passages of scripture verbatim, was understood variously: 'This meaning of Lollard,--a heretical Flemish lay preacher,--was undoubtedly that implied by the Irish Cistercian monk, Henry Crump, who caused a disturbance in 1383 by calling the Wycliffites "Lollards", in a sermon preached in the church of S. Mary the Virgin...But ecclesiastics connected the derivation with lolium, the tares sown among the wheat; and the populace, even Wycliffites themselves, with the ME loll (lounge, sprawl). Cf. the Wycliffite preacher who said "the most blessed Loller" was Christ Himself, "lolloed between two thieves"...'

a party of dissidents, only loosely organized when they were organized at all, who advocated the free translation of the scriptures and various other reforms in the Church. Eventually, it applied to the followers of Wyclif.

It is difficult to understand, today, why the translation of the scriptures would have been an important issue in the Church, so much so that it became the focus of rebellion and charges of heresy. In fact, however, the issues were much deeper than the simple translation of the Bible. Translation of scripture, though officially frowned upon, was already practiced in a small way by some elements of the Church: by the Dominicans, for example, who incorporated some free translation into their preaching and teaching.⁸⁰ Written translation of the Scriptures was not approved of in general, however, because of the larger question of Church authority: If layfolk obtained the scriptures for themselves, how would they know how to interpret them? The fear was that free translation would lead to free interpretation, and consequently to genuine heresy. This, in turn, would always imply anarchy: rebellion from the Church, the True Order. This fear was borne out by the character of the "Lollards" before Wyclif, who on the whole hindered their own cause through lack of education and of diplomacy.

The early Lollards, i.e., the Waldensians, were what we might call "fundamentalists"--not, however, merely in the sense that they took seriously the contents of scripture, but in a pejorative sense, that they did not always see the content of scripture for its language. The original concern was to "undo" the Vulgate into contemporary languages. Sometimes, however, this was achieved

80 For this and the following see ibid., pp. 58-88 and passim.

without regard to scholarship: out of respect for the scriptures themselves, for example, grammar was contorted to match the exact wording of the Latin text. The result could be incredible distortion of the meaning of the text. The Church insisted, not surprisingly, that the scriptures ought to be "interpreted" by her own learned men, whose teachings would be made available to laymen by priests and friars. But the ignorance and immorality of many of the friars and the parsons was well known. The Lollards insisted on their work as a matter of right, making the scriptures (and therefore the means to salvation) directly available to them in a corrupt age. The Church saw them as an undisciplined lot, who were performing an unnecessary and therefore dangerous task.

It is clear that, underlying the issues of translation and of Church authority, there were deeper theological and philosophical problems which would not be fully articulated until the time of the Reformation. One concerned the "means" to salvation itself: Was it necessary for laymen to know the scriptures at all in order to be "saved"? Or was it not enough for them to confess their sins and to be absolved of them, to practice piety, and to communicate at least once a year? (The Sacraments, interestingly, were known as the "means of grace", even though as regards the Eucharist, laymen watched the celebration more than they participated in it.⁸¹ On the other hand, the

81 See Jungmann, Joseph A., S. J., The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development, Vol. I, tr. Francis A. Brunner, C. SS. R., Benziger Brothers Inc., New York, 1951, pp. 107 ff. and passim: "The Mass is viewed [during the late medieval period] almost exclusively as an action of God. In the liturgical unfolding of the celebration of the Mass, the action of the Church, its prayer of thanks, and its gift-offerings are no longer perceived as in former ages; only the work, the redeeming work of God. The priest alone is active. The faithful, viewing what he is performing, are like spectators looking on at a mystery-filled drama of our Lord's Way of the Cross." (p. 117).

Scriptures were popularly known as the "Old Law" and the "New Law", implying the need to follow them as the commandments of God.)

Another question was that of the individual's relationship to the Church and to society: Is man an individual who worships God in the privacy of his own heart, and who is free to make his own judgements regarding the Word of God? Or is he a part of the Body of Christ, subject to Holy Church in discipline, and bound to come to Her for his knowledge of the Word and for salvation?⁸² We shall see that these are issues addressed by Julian, though indirectly, in the Revelations, as she attempts to understand her relation to the Church on the one hand, to whom she must submit; and to her own Lord Jesus, on the other, who had shown her the Revelations himself, apart from Holy Church.⁸³

There was a more immediate sense, too, in which Lollardy must have affected Julian, and which is reflected in the Revelations. The Lollard's refusals to submit to the authority and the discipline of the Church in the matters of preaching and of translation led to a severe reaction against them in England, both on the level of Councils and bishops, and locally as they were condemned by parish priests and by layfolk. In 1401 William Sawtre was the first to be burnt at the stake near Norwich, at Smithfield; and the

82 Cf. Workman, Herbert B., John Wyclif: A Study of the English Medieval Church, Vol. II, Oxford University Press, 1926, p. 19: "We note the individualism of Wyclif's system. The organic whole finds little or no place; every man stands face to face with the Will of God; individualism permeates every act of his life."

83 See below, pp. 428 ff. Critics have commonly taken Julian, in Ch. 50 of the Revelations and elsewhere, to see a conflict between the teachings of the Church regarding damnation, and the content of her own visions.

so-called "Lollard's Pit" was to be only a mile or so away from Julian's cell.⁸⁴ Walter Hilton, Julian's contemporary, is better known for his mystical writings and his gentle exhortations to contemplatives; but he was one of those who reacted fiercely to the threat of heresy, possibly taking part in its harsh repression.⁸⁵ Whether Julian was aware of this is not known, but we noted that the scribe's colophon at the end of the Revelations seems to indicate a fear that the Revelations would be interpreted as a Lollard work, with possible repercussions upon the anchoress.⁸⁶ Nor is it inconceivable that Julian was afraid of the charge of Lollardy. Other anchoresses had been so charged already; and Margery Kempe describes how close she came to being burnt herself, as a "false Lollard".⁸⁷ It may be for this reason that Julian so often protests her loyalty to the Church, and her willingness to submit to it--as, for example, in Ch. 9 of the Revelations:

84 Meech and Allen, p. xlix. Since St. Julian's Church is on a small hill, it is just possible that fires at the "Lollard's Pit", across the river, were visible from Julian's cell.

85 The Goad of Love, ed. Clare Kirchberger, Faber and Faber Ltd., London, 1951, pp. 22-23. In 1388 Hilton's Prior was appointed to examine (and to imprison) Lollards in Nottinghamshire. Possibly, Hilton took part in the examinations. In any case, The Scale speaks vehemently of "heretics", though the Lollards or Wycliffites are not mentioned by name (cf. Scale Chs. 20, 58, etc., and Hilton's other works).

86 See above, p. 45.

87 See Anson, Peter F., The Call of the Desert, Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, London, 1964, p. 175; "There appear to have been exceptional cases when recluses were allowed to leave their cells. For instance, there was Matilda, an anchoress at St. Peter's, Leicester, who was suspected of being infected with heresy. She was taken out, and after being examined by the bishop, and having retracted any heterodox Lollard opinions she may have held, was brought back to her cell and walled up again."

Margery is specifically called a "false Lollard" by monks in Ch. 13 of the Book. (See n. 56, above).

Yet in all things I believe as Holy Church preacheth and teacheth. For the faith of Holy Church, of which I had understanding beforehand and which, I hope by the grace of God, I will fully keep in use and in custom, stood continually in my sight. It was my will and meaning never to accept anything that could be contrary thereto. (Ch. 9, p. 61)

At the same time that Julian witnessed popular unrest regarding the institutions of the Church, she would also have been aware of a movement spurred, at least to some extent, by recent developments in English and European scholasticism. It is not that the scholastics would have affected her directly; but the concepts which were developed at Oxford or at Paris did affect the teaching of the Orders, including the monks and friars that Julian would have known. In her day scholars were sharply divided into a number of "schools". The chief of these were the followers of Thomas Aquinas, the famous Italian Dominican (1225-1274); of Duns Scotus, a Franciscan educated at Oxford (1274-1308); and of William of Ockham, a revolutionary thinker who also was a Franciscan educated at Oxford (c. 1300-c. 1348). The debates between the Thomists, Scotists, and Ockhamists, between certain Platonic and Aristotelean categories of thought, Realism and Nominalism, knowledge in general and knowledge in special, were neither as obscure and unimportant as they often appear to the modern reader, nor were they eminently practical. On the one hand they were to determine the course of philosophy, physics, and mathematics for the centuries to come. On the other hand, by the end of the fourteenth century scholasticism had retreated into a web of logical problems which, after the radical nominalism of Ockham, would eventually lead to the collapse of scholastic theology as a whole.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Cf. Winkworth, Susannah, tr., The History and Life of the Reverend Doctor John Tauler with Twenty-five of his Sermons, Allenson, London, c. 1905, p. 102.

The issues are too complex to be summarized here, and in any case Julian, who was not an academic, was probably not familiar with the arguments. Nevertheless the Revelations demonstrates her concern for the practical side of scholastic questions which were being asked at the time: Is it possible to have direct knowledge of God? Does God act as a kind of "unmoved mover" who is the truly Rational Being--or is divine will guided not by reason, but by Love--or can we say anything about God's will at all? Is all of human life predestined by God? How can we be sure whether we have attained his grace?⁸⁹

'...the colossal volumes of the schoolmen, embracing as they did within the vast sweep of their speculation disquisitions upon the nature of the Godhead, upon the universe of superhuman intelligence...and upon the nature of man and matter,--while affording a tremendous gymnastic discipline to the human intellect, were barren in actual practical results, and might well be unsatisfactory to one whose soul craved to be something more than a logical athlete.' (She goes on to quote from an unidentified sermon of Tauler's as follows:) "These great masters of Paris do read vast books, and turn over the leaves with great diligence, which is a very good thing but these [spiritually enlightened men] read the true living book, wherein all things live: they turn over the pages of the heavens and the earth, and read therein the mighty and admirable wonders of God."

For a comprehensive survey of medieval scholasticism including that contemporary with Julian, see Gilson, Etienne Henry, History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages, Random House, New York, 1955. A standard text on the scholasticism of Julian's period is by de Wulf, Maurice, History of Medieval Philosophy, Vol. II, Longman's, Green and Co., New York, 1926. A less technical account will be found in Pieper, Josef, Scholasticism, Pantheon Books, New York, 1960.

- 89 The scholastics, of course, did not pose their questions in quite this way. However, two areas of inquiry which did find their way into popular speculation, and which are reflected in the Revelations, are 1) the attributes of God, and the nature of our knowledge of God; and 2) the nature of grace, predestination and free will. Crudely put, these became the questions whether it is possible to have positive knowledge of God (as opposed to knowing God only with reference to what God is not, *i. e.*, created being); and whether the acts of God, and therefore the destiny of man, are determined, so to speak, by God's attributes--*i. e.*, Reason, or a divine will guided by Love--or whether, on the other hand, God acts entirely freely, and therefore indeterminately.

In a sense, the Revelations reflects a rejection of the scholastic approaches to these questions, typifying a spiritual movement towards piety and simplicity which was sweeping both England and the Continent. This movement, a kind of "practical mysticism", found its expression in mystical and ascetical writings, sometimes obviously anti-intellectual (in England) and often lyrical in their style.

The new piety could be discerned in several forms. Along the Rhine there developed a so-called Frauenmystik, or woman's mysticism, typified by a large number of woman visionaries who became popularly known. This, in turn, was part of a more general phenomenon called the Gottesfreunde, or "Friends of

Through Part I of the Summa Theologia, Thomas develops a kind of negative theology, in which he affirms that the attributes of God can be known in a general way, by natural reason (i.e., God's existence or individuality, his goodness, perfection, infinity, etc.); but that, on the other hand, the essence of God is beyond knowing, except supernaturally. God's relationship to the universe is governed by his attributes, therefore it conforms to Reason; and what is good (conforming to God) is rational. Here Thomas employs an Aristotelean concept of God, the "unmoved mover", together with a strongly Platonic method (based on the reality of universals or ideas) and certain Neoplatonic concepts, e.g., that God cannot be known because his mode of being is greater than created being.

Duns Scotus shifted the emphasis from divine attributes (e.g., Reason) to the divine Will, which, he said, is guided by Love, and which is prior to reason and cognition in the order of being. Reason alone is not sufficient to provide knowledge of God. The central problem under discussion--the existence (or not) and nature of universals that can be known--is beyond the scope of this note. Its implication for the layman, however, was a growing conception of God as distant and unknowable. This conception was confirmed by Ockham, on the basis of totally new premises. By rejecting the existence of universals except in the mind (nominalism) Ockham essentially limited the area of philosophical inquiry to human existence, leaving God, as it were, out of the frame of reference of knowledge. Since God's relationship to creation can no longer be deduced (in this system), it becomes solely a matter for faith--or doubt. Following Ockham, therefore, there is a new interest in the nature of justification and grace, and the problem of assurance regarding salvation. (See Knowles, op. cit., pp. 74 ff.).

God", movement.⁹⁰ The "Friends of God" were not an organization, nor did they constitute an official movement in the sense, for example of the Franciscans. Rather, they were individuals who were often in touch with one another in person, through word of mouth, and through letters, who shared a common approach to worship and to theology. Their sermons and writings are characterized by a devotion to Jesus (and the frequent use of his name), a new emphasis on the Holy Spirit (albeit in opposition to heretical groups such as the Bretheren of the Free Spirit), and by a renewed stress on the importance of individual and corporate prayer. Nor were their spokesmen uneducated men. The eminent theologian of the Netherlands, Geert Groote (d. 1384), seems to have originated a part of this movement known as the devotio moderna: Characterized by prayer, private devotion, and ascetism, the "new way" led to the founding of religious common-houses, including the one in which Thomas à Kempis was later to compose his Imitation of Christ.⁹¹

We have already mentioned important spiritual writers who were contemporary with Julian in England, including Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton, and the author of the Cloud of Unknowing. Also contemporary was the anonymous monk of Farne (an island in the Farne group, off of the northeast tip of England), whose Book exhibits some points of similarity with Julian's.⁹² The list of

90 For this and the following see Seesholtz, Anna Groh, Friends of God: Practical Mystics of the Fourteenth Century, Columbia University Press, New York, 1934; and Jones, Rufus M., The Flowering of Mysticism: The Friends of God of the Fourteenth Century, Macmillan Company, New York, 1940.

91 Knott, Betty I., tr., The Imitation of Christ, Collins (Fontana Books), London, 1963, pp. 12-14.

92 See p. 63 below.

now-famous contemporaries in Europe, some of whom were canonized, is great. Jan van Ruysbroeck (d. 1381) was writing his mystical treatises in Flanders, and has some claim to being the greatest of Europe's late medieval theologians. John Gerson (d. 1427) was writing in France. Groote gave rise to a whole "school", to which Thomas à Kempis (who wrote the Imitation before about 1427) may be seen to belong. The famous Dominican, Meister Eckhardt, was roughly contemporary (d. c. 1327), and evolved a kind of "scholastic mysticism". His student, John Tauler (d. 1361) became one of the best-known of the writers and preachers associated with the "Friends of God" movement, along with Henry Suso (d. 1366) and later, Nicholas of Cusa (1401-c. 1464). Here the anonymous Theologia Germanica, a collection of mystical writings, was being produced--later to influence Martin Luther, who published it for the first time. In Spain, Ramon Lull (d. 1315) had produced several long theological romances, or dialogues. And an extraordinary number of women mystics, less well known today than in Julian's time, commanded respect:⁹³ Mechtilde of Magdeburg (d. c. 1282), St. Mechtilde of Hackeborn (d. 1298), St. Gertrude of Helfta (d. 1302), Bl. Angela of Foligno (d. 1309), Bl. Christina of Stommeln (d. 1312), Margaret Ebner (d. 1351), Christine Ebner (d. 1356), St. Bridget of Sweden (d. 1373), Adeheid of Langmann (d. 1375), St. Catherine of Siena (d. 1380), St. Katherine of Sweden (d. 1391), Bl. Dorothea of Prussia (d. 1394), and St. Mary of Venice (d. 1399). All of these women, with the exception of Katherine of Sweden, produced books on their mystical experiences.

93 This list, with slight modification, is taken from Meech and Allen, p. lx. Miss Allen cites these particular mystics because of the continuity of their works and the possibility (however small) that they influenced Margery Kempe.

It was not necessary to belong to an Order, or to live as a solitary, to follow the "modern devotion" or to live under vows. In Julian's day there were many so-called "tertiaries"--adherents to an Order who remained in their role of tradesman or housewife, but who voluntarily embraced the Rule of the Order insofar as it was practicable. Some of these formed communities; and other communities formed of laymen and women who were not associated with any Order at all, but who wished to take the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. On the Continent, male members of some of these communities, who advocated strict poverty and therefore often begged for a living, were known as Behards (f. Béguines).⁹⁴ Women's common houses, or Beguinages, could be found in many large cities, including Norwich, by the late fourteenth century.⁹⁵ The various groups differed in emphases, as in degrees of orthodoxy. Some, like the "Free Spirits", were openly heretical; others were simply eccentric. The Church was constantly obliged to decide which was which, and was not always able to make up its mind. The teachings of some of the most popular spokesmen for the age were eventually declared heretical, as were certain of Meister Eckhardt's.⁹⁶ But there can be no doubt that a desire for the

94 Named after Lambert le Bègue, a preacher in the Netherlands c. 1167-91. "The English word beggar is probably derived through O.F. begard from the Flemish beggaert, a follower of Lambert le Bègue; the form beggaert being derived either directly from Bègue with the mas. ending ard, hard, or from the Latinized Beguinus, with ard. The earliest English example is begarres, in the Ancren Riwe of 1225, and the word beg means always, to ask alms, (not, to be a lay preacher). There is no Flemish word beg, to ask alms." --Deanesly, The Lollard Bible, p. 69, n. 4.

95 Tanner, op. cit., p. 116; Dunn, F. I., in Handbook, p. 18.

96 By Pope John XXII in 1329, who condemned twenty-eight of Eckhardt's propositions. The proceedings against Eckhardt were arguably begun for political reasons; but it would have to be confessed, even by his admirers, that many of his more radically Neoplatonic statements regarding the existence of God in the soul are either heretical or liable to heretical interpretation.

ascetical and the simple, with an emphasis on the immanence of God by the Spirit, and in prayer, typified the popular piety of Julian's day.

While asceticism played an important part in fourteenth century life, the extent of ascetical practice advocated by the different groups varied tremendously. Such notable ascetics as Henry Suso were probably the exception, rather than the rule. In England, at least, the age of severe asceticism seems to be largely over: The Riwle warns against harsh measures, as do Walter Hilton and others.⁹⁷ In Spain, it was still to come. Margery Kempe tells us that she was considered somewhat eccentric, therefore, in her various disciplines: She decided, for example, after several years of marriage, and children, to take up the life of chastity, further complicating life for her long-suffering husband. This development may have been suggested by the story of St. Cecelia, who inspired Julian; but it has been remarked that in Julian's day, the ascetical ideal with regard to celibacy meant that in general, passionate love of any kind (even within marriage) was looked upon as sinful.⁹⁸ Thus Julian's three prayers, and her later vow as an anchoress, reflect the ascetical mood of her day. She does not tell us in the Revelations, however, the extent of her own self-denial or the nature of her ascetical practices.

Although we may think of Julian as being somewhat isolated from the important theological and pietistic developments of her time, especially after

97 The Riwle, Part VII, prohibits wearing iron, or hedgehog skins, or scourging" with a leaded scourge, or with holly or thorns". She is not to draw blood without her director's permission(!). Compare Hilton in Ch. 75 of the Scale ("How hunger and physical distress greatly hinder spiritual progress") where he warns against rigorous fasting.

98 Curtis, Geoffrey, C.P., "Mother Julian of Norwich: Two Kinds of Marriage", unpublished paper given at the Sixth Centenary Celebration, May, 1973.

becoming a recluse, this was not necessarily the case. We have already seen, from Margery Kempe's visit (and from the Ancrene Riwe), that an anchoress was not cut off from the world by any means. Julian's own location in Norwich was especially advantageous for communication with the world abroad. Norwich was a metropolitan city, whose streets were jammed with traders, and Religious, from all parts of the known world. They brought with them books and ideas, as well as goods; and Julian would have come into contact with them, particularly when pilgrims came especially to see her from other towns, or were directed to her when they entered the city. Julian's contemporaries, too, were more experienced at travel than we might imagine. Margery Kempe got as far as the Baltic sea in her wanderings, which included the Holy Land, much of Europe, and England. Hermit-preachers, like Richard Rolle, were to be seen everywhere, sometimes moving great distances. William Flete, one of England's Austin friars, requested permission from his Order in 1359 to take up the eremetical life; upon approval, he and certain companions promptly moved to Italy.⁹⁹ There he spent the rest of his life in a cave at Lecceto, not far from the home of St. Catherine of Siena, of whose "family" he was a part. Whether he sent news of her to England cannot be said, though it appears that after 21 years he had written only once to his brothers at home. However, news of such extraordinary men, of their teachings, of visions (such as those of St. Catherine) and of important sermons and other marvels soon travelled by word of mouth from country to country, with the movement of pilgrims and tradesmen. Through

⁹⁹ See Gwynn, op. cit., pp. 139 ff. Flete was associated by reputation with the "Friends of God".

these, Julian may have known about her spiritual sisters, such as Catherine, even if she did not have the opportunity to read their works herself.

Finally, Julian's visions themselves fit into a broader picture of mediev-
als who experienced visions and other supernatural phenomena. These were
probably not so common as is sometimes suggested in discussions of the Middle
Ages, or of the mystics. It has been pointed out that in the English mystical
tradition, supernatural experiences were discouraged by the important spiritu-
al teachers, and in any case they did not play a large part in the formation
of their theology.¹⁰⁰ The validity of the visionary experience was not dis-
puted in principle, but the warning was given that demonic imitations would
be proffered to lead astray the unwary and, if possible, even the well-intentioned
contemplative. On balance, however, it was often a visionary experience which
set an individual apart for the "spiritual" life; and the fact that some writ-
ers, such as Hilton in the Scale, caution against them, indicates their pre-
valence.

Life at Conisford

Before looking to the theology of the Revelations itself, it will be
helpful to look briefly at town life as Julian would have known it in Conis-
ford. The Revelations reflects, in subtle ways, both the trauma and beauty of
ordinary life in Julian's time, and it is important for us to bear in mind the
conditions under which it was written. Julian's concern for the theological
insight gained in her visions keeps her from remarking on the social and

100 Knowles, op. cit., pp. 122-123; following Butler, Dom Cuthbert, Western
Mysticism, Barnes and Noble, New York, 1922, pp. xxiii-xxiv, 127. Butler
distinguishes between "mystical states" and "psycho-physical states", and
what he regards as true mystical theology. See below, pp. 88ff, pp. 116ff

ecclesiastical problems of which she was aware. On the other hand, her theology always finds its expression in practical terms. She shows a deep sensitivity for the suffering that she must have witnessed, and the whole concern of her work is to bring joy to the reader in an age which could be both colourful and cruel.

Norwich is a city which has kept its ancient past very much alive. The ancient churches are still there, as are parts of the city wall. Apart from slight industrial pollution, the sky is still magnificent, as Grace Warrack remarks. A trip to the country reveals what it must have been like in Julian's day: broad and clear, a deep azure on sunny days, of which there are many. A garden outside St. Julian's bears flowers like those Julian must have seen, owing to the commerce with Holland and Flanders: the tulips especially are beautiful, covering the beds in early spring. One of the most rewarding sights is the dawn, which comes early in May (as Julian tells us), first with the sound of larks, and then gradually, with soft colours unique to that part of England.

If one walks down upper King Street today, turning down the alley which leads past St. Julian's, the sights, noises and smells will not be much different in character from what they must have been six hundred years ago. Across the alley from the church, for example, is a huge brewery. It fills the whole area with the smell of malt, and the noise of mills and lorries. The nuns at All Hallows Convent, adjacent to the church, say that their windows rattle during the divine offices, owing to the pulse of turbines next-door. Meantime the sound of heavy traffic and of pedestrians' chatter on Rouen Road, turning down to King Street, is ever-present. Rouen Road did not exist in Julian's day, but King Street was much the same, and carried

heavy traffic. The smell of malt would have been there, along with the noise of carts, horses and oxen, shouting wagoneers, bells, pigs, hawkers, minstrels, and--just as today--the drunks returning home after pub-closing time. Down the street, at Ber Gate, cattle were driven down the narrow road morning and evening past Carrow Abbey. Today the buildings still crowd the street, and at the foot of the alley, there stands the same two-storey house, with a few changes, that Julian saw. Beyond it is the canal, with barges of cargo. Perhaps the only real difference in the character of the buildings is that now some of the shops stand empty, and there is a publican's college in the old house by St. Julian's alley.

There are improvements, of course, since Julian's time. In her day King Street may have been paved with cobblestones, but most of the streets of the city were not.¹⁰¹ Probably a "kennel", or channel, ran down its center, designed to carry off sewage and rainwater. This quickly became a garbage receptacle for the houses lining the street: shopkeepers, fishmongers, poulterers, butchers, cooks and housewives found it easier to throw their refuse out the door directly into the street, than to cart it away. There, wild pigs, dogs, ravens, rats and cats fought over what they would eat. They, together with the hobnailed wheels of carts, and horses, kept the lanes churned into a deep mudbath. Sand and gravel were spread to help the situation, but the

101 For the following see Healy, Sean, Town Life, B. T. Batsford, Ltd., London, 1968; Salzman, Louis F., English Life in the Middle Ages, Oxford University Press, London, 1926; and Bagley, John J., Life in Medieval England, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1960. An interesting study of streets and paving contemporary with Julian has been published: Salusbury, G.T., Street Life in Medieval England, 2nd. Ed., Pen-in-Hand Publishing Co., Oxford, 1948.

street was not a place to be if one could help it. Water had to be fetched periodically from the wells and the streams which ran through the town; but as there were no lights outdoors, one did not go into the street at night, even for this necessary chore.

St. Julian's church, like other churches and walls which have survived in Norwich since the Middle Ages, is made of cut stone, and flint set in concrete. Most houses, however, were far less sturdy: A frame was erected of beams or bent poles; then the walls were filled in with wattle-and-daub, and thatched straw was added for the roof. Larger houses had an extra layer of "lump", a crude brick of mud and straw, overlaid with clay and whitewash. "Lump" could be eaten by rats, however, and it was not fireproof. Since fired bricks were not made, chimneys could not be built. Thus, fires for cooking and for warmth were built in clay pits, sunk in the floor, or in braziers; and even in the finest houses, smoke escaped through the roof and the door. The roofs, being straw, made this hazardous: sparks soon found their way there, to set fire to the ceiling. In this event, the fire brigade (when it existed) did not pour on water. Rather, neighbors turned out with poles and hooks, to pull down the roof before the fire spread to an adjacent house; and with brooms, to beat out the fire on the ground. The walls crumbled easily, however, so that in the event of a large fire, a battering-ram was simply used to fell the whole house--effectively limiting the range of the fire, but not the destruction of the few belongings one might have inside.

With the houses' flimsy walls and poor conservation of heat, windows either did not exist, or were very narrow, covered with horn or with oiled linen. This helped to cut down the cold, but obviously it made the interior of the houses quite dark. In winter, one had little light for handwork; and

in these months, evening comes quite early--in the afternoon, in fact--so that the living quarters must have been somewhat depressing on the coldest days. Rushes were spread on the floor to increase the warmth and to soak up filth, and some of these could be lit as crude tapers for a little light. Otherwise the alternatives were an early bed, or story-telling and singing in the dark. We can imagine that many ordinary folk were acquainted with music for this reason, as the popularity of lute, recorders, flutes and other instruments in Julian's day suggests.

In daytime, a major diversion was to go to the huge open-air markets of the City, one of which still exists. The main market was carefully divided into areas for the various guilds, which set up permanent two-storey booths. Prices were regulated by the aldermen, though records indicate complaints of graft from time to time. Here, much of the activity of the City was concentrated. Traders and students must have struggled to make themselves understood in their many languages; for even Englishmen from different parts of the country could not understand one another, as Norman French gave way to Anglo-Norman and to different dialects of English. Flemish was common, because of the large number of Flemings who traded in the City.¹⁰² Norwich had a booming wool industry, and the best weavers were from Flanders. The foreigners were much maligned by local dwellers, evidently; but they were an important

102 See Fleming, J. Arnold, Flemish Influence in Britain, Vol. 1, Jackson Wylie and Co., Glasgow, 1930, pp. 209 ff.: 'The soil of East Anglia was more suitable for pastoral and sheep-farming than any other part of England, and so attracted the bulk of Flemish refugees who settled in the towns and on the land. Gervase of Canterbury in the twelfth century speaks of the Flemish weavers flocking into England like "ravenous wolves." This uncomplimentary comparison illustrates the attitude of Normans to the Flemings...'

economic help, and left their mark permanently on the city (we still buy "worsted" wool--originally manufactured in Worstead, Norfolk, by the Flemings).

The period of Julian's lifetime was not an easy one in English history. The Hundred Years' War began in 1337 and dragged on, a constant drain on the pockets of the people and the lives of the nobility. But the chief source of sorrow for all was the Black Death. This form of Plague--either bubonic or pneumonic, probably both--spread rapidly through England during the fourteenth century. It arrived with ships at Hampshire and Dorset in the autumn of 1348, carried by the vermin of rats. In Norwich it struck in 1348-49; again in 1361; and yet again in 1369. The first passage brought the highest death tolls, but even the later epidemics brought astonishing mortality. A third of the whole population of England died; some of the monasteries, and even whole villages, were wiped out.¹⁰³

It is difficult to measure the full effects of the Black Death today, but we can detect its profound influence in many different areas of fourteenth century life. It became a major factor in education, in agriculture and trade, in labour economics, and in the administration of the Church. Perhaps its greatest single effect, however, was psychological: first because of the shock associated with mass deaths, and second, because of the theological climate of the time. It was believed, for example, that to die without benefit of confession and absolution--not to mention dying apart from baptism--would virtually guarantee eternal damnation. In any event, parishoners were required to make confession at least once a year to their own priest. With the Black Death,

103 For this and the following see Bagley, op. cit., pp. 158 ff.; Knowles, op. cit., pp. 8-13, and passim.

however, there were so many deaths that priests could not take confessions, administer last rites, or baptise quickly enough. Families could not even bury the dead--a situation which Julian seems to reflect in one of her visions, of a body lying in the mud (ch. 64, p. 172). The result was widespread fear and depression. The so-called "Flagellants" could be seen moving through the towns, calling for confession of the sins which were presumed to have brought about the Plague, and advocating flagellation as a means to salvation.¹⁰⁴ The subject of death became a major theme in artwork of the time. The assumption that salvation might not be a possibility any longer, because of the evident wrath of God, must have affected moral behaviour as well.

Other social and economic effects of the Black Death are well known. Landowners could not find workers to bring in harvests or, later, to occupy their holdings. At first, the cost of labour went up, a situation which helped working classes for a time. But this soon led to such measures as the "Statute of Labourers" in 1351, freezing wages to their pre-1348 level, and creating general economic confusion. Profits did not increase, but expenses did. Any type of commodity would have become hard to get, as was skilled labour.¹⁰⁵ And in a period when education had generally been on the rise, the Death brought a dramatic setback, notably in the priesthood. After the Black Death, educated priests were increasingly rare, and illiterate monks, even

104 An interesting and detailed account of the Plague in Europe and England, including a translation of the German "Song of the Flagellants" is by Hecker, J.F., "The Black Death: An Account of the Deadly Pestilence of the Fourteenth Century", in Popular Science Literature, April, 1885.

105 An account of the economic effects of the Plague in England is given in Oman, Charles, The Great Revolt of 1381, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1969, pp. 5-10.

boys, were received into the monasteries.¹⁰⁶

Following hard on the outbreak of Plague, and stemming partially from it was the Peasants' Revolt, which shattered Norwich in June, 1381.¹⁰⁷ It was the first civil uprising of its kind in English history. The causes for the outbreak were complex and long-standing, being largely the frustration of the working classes in general: in their inability to do anything without paying a tax for it (from crossing a bridge to selling a cow or raising a crop), in their inability to hold land, in the losses from the Black Death, in their poor food, and finally--at a time of sudden relative prosperity--in the sudden reduction and freezing of wages in the "Statute of Labourers". A more immediate cause, which proved to be the last straw, was a poll-tax levied on all England in the spring of 1381, to help finance the continuous war in France. After attempts by whole villages to evade the tax were met with countermeasures, rioting broke out in Essex on May 30. Marchers, inspired by the preaching of John Ball and led by Wat Tyler, entered London with the vague aim of over-throwing the monarchy. Government institutions, the rich, foreigners and Jews all provided handy targets. When the insurrectionists reached Norwich, after a brief spell of looting and carnage, they were quickly and brutally stopped by the Bishop, Henry Depenser. But the harm had been done, and the bad feelings which resulted from the Revolt, and even which brought it about, were to remain. All these sources of heartbreak lend poignancy to Julian's desire prior to the visions to die, to be "freed of this world" (Ch. 3, p. 50); and to her searching questions, throughout the Revelations, regarding

106 Deanesly, Lollard Bible, op. cit., pp. 158 ff. and 172.

107 Oman, op. cit.

the wrath of God and the evidence of his love.

Various other elements of Norwich life find their way into the Revelations. Julian describes the sea-bed, for example (ch. 10, p. 63). Since the sea is not within sight of Norwich, this has been taken to mean that she grew up elsewhere; on the other hand, it could indicate the Wensam River in flood stage, within sight of Julian's cell at Conisford.¹⁰⁸ There are some references in the text to the weaver's trade, which was extremely important to Norwich: the Church, she says, will be shaken "as men shake a cloth in the wind" (ch. 28, p. 92). Jesus is seen to hang on the cross "as men hang out a cloth to dry" (ch. 17, p. 76). The dreadfully cold wind blowing around the cross, as Julian saw it (ch. 16), reminds one of the constant sea wind which blows across the Norfolk plain.

One of the most important features of contemporary life to influence the Revelations is its colour. Against the background of turmoil and death which typified Julian's time, there remained a certain charm which was the last breath of an age of chivalry and courtly love. Julian lived at a time when the social aspects of knighthood and chivalry were still very important--as, for example, in the relationships between the knights and the peasants--and at a time when romantic, courtly, music and literature were enjoying their last flower. Both these were to prove very important for her theology. The incarnate Christ appears to her, in the vision of the Lord and the servant (ch. 51), as a common labourer: dirty and hard-working, wearing a short, ragged kilt soaked with sweat. At the same time, the Son of God appeared to

108 Sayer in Handbook, p. 8.

her as a great knight or lord: majestic in his robes, handsome, magnificent. Here is a paradox of great significance. Jesus is the great Knight, but one who is "homely" as well as "courteous". "Courtesy" is a word which comes from the language of courtly literature and music, the world of knights and ladies. "Homeliness" on the other hand, comes from the opposite spectrum of life: the world of peasants and of Everyman.¹⁰⁹ Julian sees Jesus as "homely", i.e., loving and familiar, making his home with her; yet he impresses her as the Knight who stoops to the level of the peasant, lifting the peasant to his level as a personal friend (ch. 7 and elsewhere).

Another side of the colour of Julian's time is its art, which in Norwich would have been magnificent. She refers, therefore, to the vivid paintings of the crucifixion which she had seen, probably in the cathedral in Norwich (ch. 1 of the Shorter Version):

Notwithstanding the fact that I believed earnestly all the pains of Christ as Holy Church shews and teaches (and also the paintings of crucifixes made, by the grace of God, in conformity with the teaching of Holy Church, to the likeness of Christ's Passion as far as the skill of man may reach); notwithstanding all this true belief, I desired a bodily sight...(SGL, p. 1)

Norwich must have contained some of the finest art in England, owing to its commerce with Flanders. Although much of it was destroyed in the Dissolution, much can still be seen. A retable from the cathedral, contemporary with Julian, is among the important works that have been preserved and restored. It depicts incidents in Jesus' life, including the crucifixion, resurrection, and the ascension; and its style is a masterly example of Norfolk painting, with an admixture of Flemish and Italian influence.¹¹⁰

109 Reynolds, " 'Courtesy' and 'Homeliness' in the Revelations", op. cit.

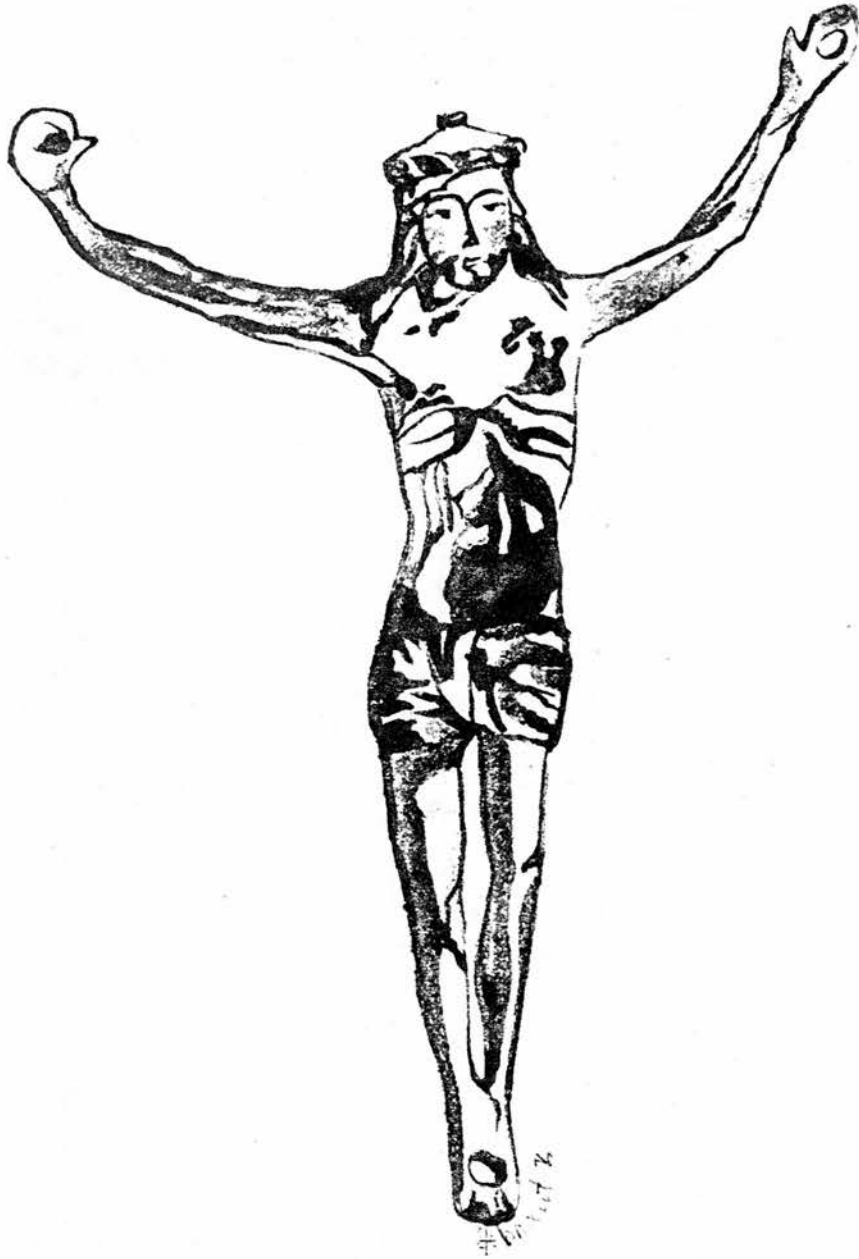
110 Whether the Norfolk painters influenced Italians, or the other way around, is not established. Similar style and motifs will be seen in

The art of Norfolk in the latter part of the fourteenth century is distinctive and particularly beautiful. Paintings of Christ on the cross are graceful and refined, inevitably showing the head bent forward, a little to the right, and the body very slightly curved in a graceful reverse-"S" shape. The Virgin, in these paintings of the crucifixion, is usually depicted on Jesus' right, with St. John on the left. Christ's face is realistic and pathetic, but the paintings do not show the goriness of German or Spanish art. Rather, there is quiet emphasis on the glory of the Son of God: the colours are jewel-like, and though for the first time in art Jesus is depicted as dead or dying, one has the distinct impression of looking upon the triumphant Pantokrator, rather than a weak and broken Christ.

It is an interesting question, in light of the art which Julian might have seen, what kind of crucifix it was that the priest brought her, and which she contemplated during the sixteen visions. Julian does not describe it, but presumably the figure of Jesus was fairly realistic, with the eyes open. The "three wounds" mentioned in her prayers remind us that in the fourteenth century, for the first time, the cross is depicted with three nails rather than with four (one nail piercing both feet). The emphasis which Julian places on

Italian paintings of the same period. Parker, op. cit. pp. 200-203, cites evidence that the Norwich Cathedral retables were painted by an Italian painter, to wit: Similar altar pictures in Perugia and Assisi, with their corresponding rarity in England; use of a red crayon, and egg-white in the tempera; Siennese style, with "Italian faces" (i.e., not angular, as in German paintings); etc. Parker notes the similarity between this painting, and those by the Italian Simone Meanni, who died in 1345. However, retables are uncommon in England due to destruction of them in the Reformation. Those at Norwich Cathedral have a Norfolk style of their own, and are probably by an English painter (Thurlow, Gilbert, The Medieval Painted Retables in Norwich Cathedral, Jarrol and Sons Ltd., Norwich, 1967 [booklet with illustrations available in the Cathedral]).

the crown of thorns is significant, since not all crucifixes of the time depict a crown with thorns (some having only a crown of plaited reeds). Unfortunately, few English processional crosses of the period still exist, because of the destruction of the churches and the monasteries during the Reformation. In Norwich, however, St. Peter's Hungate, a small church which has been preserved as a museum, contains two small bronze figures from processional crosses which may date from about Julian's time. Both figures show signs of having been wrenched from their crosses, and they were preserved only by being buried beneath the floors of their churches. One of these must be much like that which Julian saw: Jesus' face is realistic and kind, the head gracefully bent, the eyes open but not staring, with the blood of his wounds flowing onto his loincloth. Here Julian saw her "maker and redeemer"; and in his face she understood the mystery of divine Love which she was to see in sixteen Revelations of God.



CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

1325	First mechanical clock in Norwich cathedral
1327	Edward III
1337	Hundred Years War begins
*1342	Julian born
1346	Battle of Crécy
1348-49	Black Death in Norwich
1349	Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole, dies of Plague
1361-62	Black Death recurs in Norwich
1369	Black Death recurs again
*1373 (8 May)	Julian receives 16 visions of divine Love
1377	Richard II
1378-82	Rise of Lollardy in England
1381 (Spring)	Wyclif's first complete Bible
1381 (30 May)	Peasants' Revolt begins in Essex
1381 (June)	Peasants' Revolt in Norwich
1391	Bridget of Sweden canonized (mentioned by Margery Kempe)
*c. 1393	Julian composes Longer Version of the <u>Revelations</u>
1395	Walter Hilton, Canon of Thurgarten, dies
1396	Revised Wyclif Bible in circulation
1399	Henry IV
1400	First garbage collection in London
1408	Convocation of Canterbury; forbids reading of Wyclif ("Lollard") Bible
1413	Henry V
*1413	The Shorter Version of the <u>Revelations</u> copied by a scribe
*1413	Thomas Edmund leaves 1 shilling to Julian
1415	Agincourt
*c. 1415	Visit by Margery Kempe of Lynne
*1415	Isabelle Ufford leaves 20 shillings to Julian
1416	Last mention of Julian in a will
1422	Henry VI
1431	Burning of Joan of Arc
1436	<u>Book</u> of Margery Kempe

CHAPTER TWO: "BUT TAKE ALL THINGS TOGETHER": THE
PROBLEM OF UNDERSTANDING THE REVELATIONS

A Book for God's Lovers

In his colophon at the end of the Revelations, the scribe expresses the hope that Julian's book will be read only by those who want to be God's "faithful lovers", and who will "take all things together" in evaluating it. These words have not lost their relevance, but show a genuine insight into the nature of the book, and the problems associated with reading it. If we approach the Revelations as medieval literature, we cannot possibly understand it--because it is not "literature", but prayer, meant for those who truly wish to share in Julian's Revelations of God's love. On the other hand, it is possible to miss the depth of what Julian has to say by concentrating too fully on her visions and her prayer, rather than on their theological significance or their practical meaning for our own lives.

Thus, the Revelations of Divine Love can be read on two levels. It is, at first sight, a semi-autobiographical account of Julian's sixteen visions; and as such, it may be read for its historical interest and for its mystical appeal. On this level, Julian becomes significant as a woman, possibly uneducated, who composed lyrical prose about the time of Chaucer, and who lived alone in her cell at Conisford. She is seen, too, as a charming figure whose book can serve as a guide to prayer: having prayed for at least twenty years in her cell, she has much to offer by way of example. The Revelations has not been studied extensively as a literary work, although where it is studied at all in our universities it is usually in the discipline of medieval English literature. But for some time it has been known as a source for meditations and for private devotion. Evidence for this is the form in which it most

often appears: as "selections" from the Revelations on one topic or another, usually chosen to reflect Julian's "optimism" and her understanding of contemplative prayer. Thus Julian can be, even for her admirers, little more than an interesting visionary--no theologian, but a writer to be consulted for devotions during Lent, or for the occasional uplift in times of trial.¹

Another level on which the Revelations may be read is that of a theological treatise. Despite its simple language and lyrical style, it touches upon

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- 1 It is perhaps a situation of condemning with faint praise. A survey of the literature will show that Julian is usually mentioned along with the fourteenth-century English mystics; but when mystical theology of the fourteenth century is discussed, Hilton and The Cloud of Unknowing, and sometimes Richard Rolle, are made the objects of study. Even writers who favour Julian have managed to give her a "special" role apart from the theologians: T. W. Coleman (English Mystics of the Fourteenth Century, Epworth Press, 1938) saves Lady Julian and Margery Kempe for last in his anthology, because he regards them as "the best wine" (p. 131). However, it is universally agreed that Margery Kempe is an eccentric, perhaps neurotic, woman who cannot be regarded as a serious theologian. In a survey designed to aid priests in their private devotions, Martin Thornton (English Spirituality, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, 1963) recommends the Revelations for contemplation over Lent, but not for study; since Julian is not a theologian in the sense of Walter Hilton or the author of The Cloud (pp. 201 ff.). A psychological study of Julian's visions has been produced by Robert H. Thouless (The Lady Julian: A Psychological Study, S.P.C.K., London, 1924) in which the author flatly states that Julian would have no place among English theologians, though she is of interest because of her unusual visions; etc. etc.

Walsh (pp. 10-11) gamely attacks the prevailing attitude by satirizing it: "The value of Julian's Revelations, it would seem, is devotional, not theological; and it lies in her successful communication of her experience of the tender love of God and her own childlike trust. Her appeal is to the heart, not to the head. The theologian admirer of Julian will insist that she is not writing a theological treatise, and that when she speaks on matters which require theological expertise, she is likely to be obscure and, it may be, erroneous, precisely because she is speaking outside her brief. She is spokesman not for theologians, but for the fervent and not very learned: for those who know, but do not know why or how they know, and are not concerned with the why and the how."

virtually every aspect of Christian theology. In particular, Julian develops a theology of divine Love: not merely that God "loves", but the nature of divine Love, and its significance for human personality and human development. Explored on this level, the Revelations quickly shows itself to be a challenging and complex work. It is no mere visionary experience, and in fact it contains almost no autobiographical remarks at all; nor is it simple-minded. Obviously Julian does not write like a scholastic, because she was not one. Far from diminishing the value of the Revelations, however, this characteristic is one of its strong points. Even if Julian's simplicity is due to a lack of academic qualification, she is an original thinker--depending more on her own visions, than on the categories which were taken for granted by her contemporaries. She is therefore able to sidestep the technical problems which entangled scholastics, and which in her lifetime were being met on the one hand by mindless enthusiasm among laymen, and on the other by learned agnosticism in the universities.

If we approach the Revelations as a serious theology, it is especially important to bear in mind Julian's originality. Until recently, the theological content of her book has scarcely been examined in its own right, on the assumption that it must have drawn heavily from the more scholarly works of the times. This approach is supported by Julian's non-technical language, which is interesting in itself (and which moves it out of the library into the realm of devotional mysticism); and by the fact that her contemporaries, Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton, and the author of The Cloud, attracted most of the scholarly attention in her day just as they do now. But the result has been to characterize her thought in terms of these more eminent men, and their presumed sources, rather than in the categories which Julian herself suggests.

Paul Molinari, S. J., in the only book-length study of Julian's theology to be produced to date, described the problem as he saw it in 1955:²

...in spite of the importance of the English school of mysticism, and of Julian in particular, in spite of numerous editions and articles published on Julian in recent years, no scientific study--at least so far as I know--has yet been published: no detailed attempt to analyze the spiritual doctrine contained in the Revelations.

He adds this warning:

The profundity of [Julian's] book is clothed in such simplicity and directness of exposition that one may at first glance overlook its hidden value. And though short and by no means a treatise, it is most compact and touches upon a surprising variety of points of doctrine in both dogmatic and spiritual theology. All of these points need to be studied in detail, before Julian's dependence upon other English mystics of her own time can properly be assessed.

With the possible exception of his own work, however, it is still the case that the study of Julian's supposed sources, and her similarities with other writers, has tended to substitute for the study of her theology itself.³

2 Molinari, Paul, S. J., op. cit., p. v.

3 In view of the fact that Julian wrote only one book, so far as is known, and that even this has never been published in a critical edition of the text, it is surprising how many books and articles have appeared which are concerned wholly or in part with her. The Handbook (pp. 53-57) lists no fewer than twenty different editions of the Revelations, including translations into French, German, and Italian (although only two English editions of the Longer Version are still in print; the earliest of the editions to appear in the list is that by Cressy in 1670). Three editions of the Revelations (Reynolds' Shorter Version, and the James Walsh and Clifton Wolters' editions of the Longer Version) were reissued for the Centenary. A definitive edition of the text, with critical apparatus, is still being prepared by Eric Colledge and James Walsh and is due to be published by the Pontifical Institute in Toronto. There are seven publications of excerpts from the Revelations, and 56 books or articles which are devoted to the Revelations or the English mystical tradition of which she is a part. Other publications are either more recent, or escaped the attention of the editors. None of these, however, systematically develops Julian's thought, except as it is seen to recapitulate other theologians or to grow out of a (rather shallow) supernatural experience of the visions.

The originality of Julian's work, which makes it difficult to classify, has led writers to reach different conclusions regarding the overall nature of her theology. Nevertheless, the differences of opinion tend to lie in whether she resembles one English mystic more than another, or whether she resembles certain Continental mystics more than English ones. As Molinari indicates, it cannot even be said whether Julian is typical of the English mysticism of her time, until her own theology has been outlined in more detail. Before attempting to explore her theology here, however, it will be helpful to become familiar with some of the arguments, and the proposed influences on Julian's thought.

A variety of similarities between Julian and other writers have been noted in recent years. Two important principles, however, have tended to be ignored in the literature. First, if Julian is at all orthodox in what she says, we should expect to find numerous parallels between the Revelations and other Christian theologies, whether Julian knew about them or not, and whether or not they date from before her time. Second, the fact that she says something which has been said before does not necessarily indicate a source for the Revelations; it only indicates that she said something which had been said before. This is particularly important when Julian recapitulates phrases or ideas which occur in other better-known works, but which in fact do not share her general approach to theology at all. For this reason, it is indeed important to "take all things together", to obtain an overall view of Julian's theology, rather than concentrating on a few points of contact with other theologians.

"God in a Point": Neoplatonism in St. Denis and the English Mystics

The most important theologian who is said to have influenced Julian, perhaps through her contemporaries, is neither English nor contemporary. He is,

oddly enough, a sixth-century Syrian monk whose real name, like Julian's, is now lost to history. Known to Julian as "St. Denys", he is now referred to as St. Dionysius or, more properly, as Pseudo-Dionysius. His true identity is absolutely unknown; what is known is that about the year 500, someone (possibly in Syria, possibly a monk) produced a series of mystical treatises in Greek, dealing with the nature of God and specifically with the nature of man's knowledge of God in faith and revelation. These mystical treatises were published under the name of Dionysius the Areopagite (the "temple-keeper") who is mentioned briefly in Acts 17 (v. 34) as someone who heard St. Paul preach at Athens, and who was converted by him.⁴

The principal works which have been attributed to Pseudo-Dionysius are the Divine Names, the Mystical Theology, Celestial Hierarchy, Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, and the Epistles. The identification of the author with the biblical Dionysius lent authority to his works, even into the thirteenth century,

⁴ St. Denys is referred to in contemporary literature and by Julian (ch. 18, p. 78) as "Denys of France", although neither the author of the treatises, nor the individual mentioned in the Acts, has any demonstrable connection with France. The following account has been given by Attwater, Donald, The Penguin Dictionary of Saints, Penguin Books Ltd., Harmondsworth, 1965, p. 104:

"By the middle of the ninth century a very strange legend had grown up round St. Dionysius, in which three different people, living in different ages, were made into one man. The original martyr was said to have been sent to Gaul by Pope St. Clement I at the end of the first century; he was identified with Dionysius the Areopagite ...and consequently he was also identified with the unknown late fifth-century author of certain famous mystical writings, which were for long erroneously attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite. In addition to this farrago, St. Dionysius was claimed as a cephalophore, 'head-carrier': that is, one of those martyrs who was fabled to have carried his severed head to his place of burial, in this case to the site of the abbey church of Saint-Denys."

See also Rolt, C.E., tr., Dionysius the Areopagite on the Divine Names and the Mystical Theology, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, 1940 (New Edition), pp. 1-3.

so that they became highly influential in Christian theology in the West as well as in the East. The path by which the Areopagite came to be known in the West is complex, and does not concern us here; we note, however, that the first important translation of his works into Latin was made by John (Scotus) Eriugena, in 860.⁵ Eriugena's own theology was subsequently influenced, not only by Dionysius, but also by Greek theology as a whole. Later translations and commentaries were written by Johannes Sarracenus (d. 1160), Thomas Gallus (d. 1240), and Robert Grosseteste (d. 1253). Grosseteste's commentary on the Divine Names became an important influence on subsequent theology in the West. Among the theologians to clearly demonstrate Dionysian influence were the Victorine mystics, Hugh and Richard (d. 1141 and 1173); and Thomas Aquinas, who patterns much of Part I of the Summa after the issues discussed by Pseudo-Dionysius in the Divine Names, and who may be seen to quote from him over seventeen hundred times, aside from his own commentary on the Divine Names.⁶

It is widely accepted that the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius were as important to the formation of fourteenth-century English mystical theology as they were in Europe as a whole. The Mystical Theology was translated into English from Latin, as Deonise Hid Diuinite, by the author of The Cloud--whose other texts also incorporate Dionysian thought, as he understood it. These writings are said to have strongly influenced Walter Hilton, and therefore, Julian of Norwich.

Until recently, it has been assumed in the literature that the theology

5 See O'Meara, John J., Eriugena, Mercer Press, Cork, 1969, pp. 20-30; Pieper, op. cit., pp. 48 ff.; cf. Colledge, op. cit., pp. 44-47.

6 Pieper, ibid., p. 53.

of Pseudo-Dionysius, and hence those who followed him, is essentially Neoplatonic; and that it is the Neoplatonic element of his thought which was most influential in English mysticism, including Julian's Revelations.⁷ Strands of thought in the Divine Names and the Mystical Theology which are usually identified as Neoplatonic, and which have been cited as important both to Julian and to English mysticism as a whole, include: 1) the concept of God as the unmoved center of the universe ("God in a point", i.e. the center of a sphere); 2) the essential unknowability of God--symbolized by a "cloud of unknowing" which intervenes between the being of God, and ourselves (technically known as the "apophatic" way of theology, stressing that our knowledge of God consists in what we do not know of God, rather than in what we know); 3) the concept of God dwelling within the soul, as a point (or "spark") of divine will which never wills to sin; and 4) the stages of contemplative life, identified by Pseudo-Dionysius as purification (purgation), illumination, and union.

A classic text which has been applied to most discussions of the English tradition, and therefore of Julian's Revelations, is Dom Cuthbert Butler's Western Mysticism.⁸ Dom Butler does not address himself to English mysticism in particular, but to the whole tradition in the West. In his study of SS.

7 But cf. Knowles, op. cit., p. 122. Knowles argues that both Walter Hilton and The Cloud omit the "equivocal Neo-Platonist and pantheistic expressions" found in Eckhardt. The Neoplatonic nature of Dionysian theology is unquestioned in the West. There is difference of opinion, however, whether it is to be applauded or regarded as heretical, or nearly so, stemming from Plotinus and pre-Christian Platonism. Cf. Rolt, op. cit., pp. 1-47 (who lends a strongly Platonic interpretation to Dionysius in his translation, and sees this Platonism as of value to the West); and Late Medieval Mysticism, ed. Ray C. Petry, Library of Christian Classics, Vol. XIII, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, pp. 33-37.

8 Butler, Dom Cuthbert, Western Mysticism, Longmans, Green and Col., London, 1919.

Augustine, Bernard, and Gregory the Great, he argues that there is a strand of western mysticism (represented by these three great writers) which is essentially different from that which followed the influence of Pseudo-Dionysius. One principal difference, Dom Butler suggests, is that between the "negative way" of theology, and the "positive way". The former, in his view, is represented by Greek apophaticism, and is to be found later on in such western theologians as Thomas Aquinas and Meister Eckhardt. True "Western" mysticism, on the other hand, insists on the "positive way": that the being of God can indeed be known and is known by the intellect. Butler also cites, as typical of genuine western theology, the importance of objective revelation of God as opposed to subjective experience: that supernatural experience is not generally equated with the mystical vision, but is in fact wholly absent, or played down, by the greatest western mystical theologians.

Although Augustine is the only one of Dom Butler's three mystics to precede Pseudo-Dionysius historically, the writings of the eastern monk did not become popular in the West until after the twelfth century. Therefore, Butler argues, Bernard and Gregory are essentially untainted by the eastern Platonism (with its "negative" theology) found in Pseudo-Dionysius; and their experience of the vision of God in contemplative prayer more truly represents the western tradition--which after the thirteenth century is almost exclusively corrupted by Platonic influence.

Since the publication of Western Mysticism, scholars writing on the English mystical theologians have tended to accept the basic premises developed by Butler. Some have preferred, however, to see the English mystics as holding in tension their own western heritage, of Augustine-Bernard-Gregory,

with the Dionysian influence which they encountered from the Continent. Dom David Knowles, in his study of the English mystics, suggests three primary influences on English mysticism contemporary with Julian:⁹ the Augustinian tradition, as understood particularly by the writers Hugh and Richard of St. Victor; the German Dominican tradition, represented especially by Meister Eckhardt and John Tauler; and an English ascetical tradition which can be traced through English spirituality from early times. Most important to the latter is John Cassian's Collationes, or "Conversations with the Desert Fathers". Written in the fourth century, it was still important in shaping English ascetical thought.¹⁰ While all three of these "strands" were admittedly influenced to some degree by "St. Denis", it is argued that the English mystics at the same time stayed close to Augustinian theology and to an ascetical tradition of their own.

We have seen that the three writers who are generally cited as the best representatives of English mystical theology, are all contemporaries of Julian: Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton, and the anonymous author of the Cloud, the Epistle of Privy Counsel, and other smaller spiritual works (including the English translation of the Mystical Theology). Each of these three writers differs from the others in important respects, not only in literary style but also in method of theology and in significant theological concepts. Nevertheless all have been said to form a single school of thought, or strand of mystical theology, which is peculiar to England, which demonstrates Dionysian

9 Knowles, Dom David, The English Mystical Tradition, Harper and Brothers New York, 1961, p. 64.

10 Colledge, op. cit., p. 14. For a discussion of Cassian's theology, see Chadwick, Owen, John Cassian: A Study in Primitive Monasticism, Cambridge University Press, 1950; A short survey of his thought is included in Late Medieval Mysticism, op. cit., pp. 31-32.

characteristics, and which characterizes the theology of the Revelations.

Richard Rolle (d. 1349), the hermit from Hampole, (Northumbria) is chronologically first. Perhaps his most significant works were the publication of English metrical rhymes which paraphrased the Psalms, and his Incendium Amoris.¹¹ His Psalms were not direct translations; but nevertheless, they were among the first attempts to render Scripture into English, and were later adopted by the Lollards and Wyclifites as precedents. He is better known, however, for his experience of "heat and song", which he discussed at length in Incendium Amoris (The Fire of Love). This book, like Rolle's commentaries on the Psalms and his other treatise, The Amending of Life, was intended for a woman solitary whose identity is unknown. He attempts here to describe the supernatural occurrences of warmth and heavenly music which he experienced himself during contemplative prayer, and which he took to indicate genuine communion with the Holy Spirit. Self-styled, if not plainly eccentric, he spent much of his life wandering about Northumbria as a hermit, preaching to his contemporaries and being known generally for his saintly life. Although Rolle was not a member of any religious Order, he was educated at Oxford. Nevertheless, his writings are never really of a scholastic nature, but remain lyrical and meditative.

Although there was a movement to canonize him sometime after his death, in anticipation of which various miracles in his name were catalogued, Rolle

11 See Deanesly, Lollard Bible, op. cit., p. 13 and passim. Several editions of Rolle's works are currently available. A standard edition, consulted for this study, is The Fire of Love or the Melody of Love and the Mending of Life or Rule of Living, ed. Francis M. M. Comper (from the translation by Richard Misyn), Methuen and Co. Ltd., London, 1914.

was never formally recognized by the Church as a saint.¹² He has been denied recognition too, as a theologian by some modern critics, on the grounds that his work is subjective and relatively shallow. His experience of "heat and song" has been considerably minimized, perhaps unfairly, by scholars as having little theological importance, particularly since Rolle declined to take up more scholastic problems such as the nature of our knowledge of God, or the categories and exact stages of Christian contemplative prayer (of which, it has been suggested, Rolle actually knew very little).¹³ There is no question, however, that he is important as a preacher of the love of God in Christ, and as among the first of the mystics to write in English. His lyrical style is still recognized as beautiful, just as it was popular in his own times.

Like all mystical writers of his period, Rolle assumes a Dionysian distinction between the "active" and the "contemplative" life. The "active" life is that in which ordinary Christians attempt to live out the virtues, particularly charity, in their daily lives--something which would be brought about by divine grace, accompanying right belief. The "contemplative" life, on the other hand, is seen as a higher calling, in which the soul aims towards union with God. Here one devoted himself not to the activity of loving, but to the passive experience of divine Love--to God himself. This was accomplished, also through grace, in the context of disciplined, contemplative prayer in

12 The reason is unknown, but may possibly be attributed to the outbreak of Plague in 1348-49 which resulted in his death. The Black Death disrupted all services of the clergy, so that canonization proceedings, which might have taken place owing to Rolle's popularity, could not be attended to. See Comper, ibid., p. 195.

13 Knowles, English Mystical Tradition, op. cit., p. 64.

purgation, illumination, and finally union with God. The contemplative life is variously described by different authors, but the "stages", or levels, of progress towards God described by Dionysius are always discernible. In England, the stages are usually termed those of the "beginner", the "proficient", and the "perfect"--each of which is said to be characterized by its own types of contemplative prayer.¹⁴ We have said that Rolle did not analyze these stages in detail; and in his insistence on the supernatural experiences of heat and song, which he associated with contemplative prayer, he may not have achieved the depth of some of his contemporaries. In any case he is seen to be at variance (in Butler's view) with the tendency in the West, which depicts contemplative life as free of the purely subjective or the purely supernatural.

Following the "western" line of thought in this regard, and defining it more precisely--but also highly influenced by the thought of Pseudo-Dionysius--is Walter Hilton, Hilton is generally considered to have influenced Julian through his well-known Scale of Perfection, his commentaries on Psalms 90 and 91, and his translation of the anonymous Stimulus Amoris. It is not known whether Julian was indeed familiar with Hilton's Scale, which he dedicates specifically to an anchoress of his acquaintance.¹⁵ Nevertheless, his work evidently was greatly influential in its time, and is regarded as among the best which English spirituality has to offer. As its name implies, the purpose of the Scale is to analyze the nature of contemplative prayer, or spiritual progress towards God, in its various stages.

14 The three stages actually have their beginnings in pre-Christian Platonism. See Late Medieval Mysticism, *op. cit.*, p. 21; and below, pp. 283 ff.

15 See below, p. 99 f., and references throughout.

Hilton's Scale differs considerably from Rolle's works, both in method and style, and in theological content; and it is possible that at some points Hilton takes Rolle to task for publishing ideas which Hilton thought to be erroneous. The principal difference between the two writers is that Hilton, an Augustinian canon, is a systematic theologian, while Rolle is not. Hilton attempts to categorize and define the nature of Christian contemplative experience objectively, rather than confining himself to his own experience. Like Rolle, however, he assumes essentially two "ways" towards salvation in this life, the active and the contemplative. He suggests that although the contemplative life is superior to the active, and is to be preferred and cultivated where possible, a "mixed" life is best--in which there is practice of the virtues in the sense of good deeds (charity), even in the development of the contemplative life.

Hilton's description of the contemplative life differs from Rolle's in keeping with Hilton's more careful and more objective approach to theological problems. Hilton counsels his anchoress to avoid supernatural experiences, apparently referring to Rolle's "heat" and "song" in more than one passage. These he sees as potentially dangerous, and even of demonic origin. Rather than seeking the supernatural experience, one should seek to negate all affections of the flesh--not only such passions as lust and appetite, but also the desire for manifestations of God's favour. One's goal should be contemplation of God, principally by loving him, and him alone. A sharp distinction is drawn, therefore, between "nature" and "grace", body and spirit, the world of man and the world of God. In this, Hilton reflects a concept which is found in Augustine and in Gregory, as well as in western writers influenced by Dionysian thought: that our minds ought to be turned away from the world, and towards God. At the

same time, he follows Rolle in that contemplative prayer, for him, is essentially Christocentric: to turn our eyes towards God, we must look to the cross.

Hilton's frequent use of Jesus' name, especially in Book II of the Scale, and his reference to the Passion, have often been remarked. It stands in obvious contrast to The Cloud, even if one argued that theologically, the author of The Cloud would not differ from Hilton in his Christology;¹⁶ and it makes a parallel to Julian's Revelations, the most obviously Christocentric of all the English mystical works. Evelyn Underhill first pointed out that Book II of the Scale appears in part to be re-written, with the name of Jesus added to the manuscript, sometimes taking the place of "God". From this she concluded that Hilton had altered his theology, from a more theocentric to a Christological approach.¹⁷ It is now thought more likely that Hilton had not, in fact, altered his doctrinal stance; but in any case the similarities between Hilton and Rolle, and Hilton and Julian, are noteworthy on this point, and may suggest a Franciscan influence in the more popular, pious sense.

The third important theologian contemporary with Julian is anonymous, though his works are easily identifiable and are well known. This writer, whose Cloud of Unknowing is best known, is the most obviously Dionysian of the English writers we have cited in this study; and he indicates in The Cloud that this is indeed his intention. It has been said that while Hilton is to be regarded as a good theologian, The Cloud is by contrast a work of genius,

16 So Walsh, p. 11, who writes that Hilton "is at one with the author of the Cloud" in his Christological approach. If so, it is a very subtle point hardly borne out by the text of The Cloud. Cf. Knowles, English Mystical Tradition, op. cit., p. 69.

17 Knowles, English Mystical Tradition, op. cit., p. 103. Cf. Kirchberger, op. cit., p. 23.

undertaking a much more difficult task than the Scale.¹⁸ Like the Scale, The Cloud of Unknowing is intended expressly for a young reader who is undertaking the contemplative life, and who is being counselled by the author on the nature of contemplative prayer and of knowledge of God. The author is seen to go beyond Hilton, however, in attempting to characterize not only the stages of contemplative life (which he sees as "common", "special", "solitary", and "perfect") but also the nature of human relationship to God as a whole. The latter is described almost entirely in negative terms, following Dionysius; and it comprises what is often regarded as the classic description of the Neoplatonic or "negative" approach to theology, in which God is said to be known principally in terms of what he is not--because as sinful creatures we cannot know God in his being at all.

The Cloud is best known today for developing essentially three concepts: the nature of ascetical theology, depicted as a "cloud of unknowing" which the contemplative must place between himself and the world; negative (or apophatic) theology, described as another "cloud of unknowing" which already exists between man and God; and the cultivation of short, repetitive devotional prayers, consisting perhaps of only one word (the author suggests "God" or "love") to aid in concentrating the attention solely on God.

The Cloud is not concerned to develop any aspect of the "active" life, and therefore marks a different path from either Rolle or Hilton. More important is the fact that The Cloud is not Christocentric in any sense. It confines its attention to "God" himself, i.e., the super-essential being of God.

18 By Helen Gardner, (in Medium Aevum, vol. 16, 1947, pp. 36-42) quoted by Colledge, op. cit., p. 77.

Although Hilton has been suggested as the possible author of the Cloud, the idea seems difficult in light of this major difference between the two works: in The Cloud, the would-be contemplative is specifically cautioned against meditations on the Passion, as a distraction and a hindrance to pure contemplation. It is even possible that the author of The Cloud deliberately refers to Hilton here, although it would be difficult to prove the direction of influence one way or another. In any case, although there are certain affinities between the two writers--for example, in the concept of turning oneself away from the world to God, and in one's progress in contemplation towards the spiritual life--they seem to be incompatible at least on this point.¹⁹

Although the author of The Cloud states that what he says fully reflects the theology of "St. Denis", there are important differences; and like Hilton, there are other influences on his thought which are not specifically Dionysian. The Cloud modifies Dionysius in several respects, two of which are important to us here.²⁰ First, Dionysius' single "cloud" of darkness which envelops God (the apophatic nature of God, symbolized by the cloud which envelops God in his appearance to the Israelites), is replaced by two "clouds"--one which prevents our knowing God in his essence, and another

19 For a comparison of the two writers, see Colledge, op. cit., pp. 66-67; 73.

20 For detailed discussion of The Cloud's modifications of Deonise Hid Diuinite and general differences from Pseudo-Dionysius' theology, see Knowles, English Mystical Tradition, op. cit., pp. 67-99. Knowles makes the slightly different point that The Cloud replaces the concept of intellectual "knowing" with that of affective "knowing" (in love, rather than reason), and stresses the action of the will in loving God. See also Hodgson, Phyllis, ed., Deonise Hid Diuinite and Other Treatises on Contemplative Prayer Related to The Cloud of Unknowing, Early English Text Society (Geoffrey Cumberledge, Oxford University Press), London, 1955, pp. xxxix-xliii.

which the contemplative deliberately places between himself and the world. Second, whereas Pseudo-Dionysius refers to the absolute "darkness" of God in himself--that is, that the being of God in himself cannot be known to us directly, because we are creatures--this concept is altered in the Cloud to say that the "cloud of unknowing" which we encounter is meant to be pierced by contemplation, and is pierced by rays of divine light (or divine knowing) in revelation. At other times, however, the rays of light are taken away, leaving us once again in the darkness (or unknowing) which constitutes the life of faith.

The latter idea, which is to have many ramifications in later mystical theology of the west (as the experience of "darkness", the "night of faith", and so on), significantly alters Dionysius' point. Orthodox theologians will develop from Dionysius the distinction, which they regard as fundamental, between knowing God in his glory (the "energies", or dynamis in Pseudo-Dionysius) and in his essence or being (ousia). The "cloud" which envelops God is seen as the shekinah ("glory") of God in the Old Testament, and as the bright light of the Transfiguration in the New Testament (Mark 9:2-10, and parallels). In this view, we see the glory of God, but never his essence. On the other hand, the glory of God mediates his essence to us: man is caught up into the very being of God, and is wholly involved--even divinized--in the manifestation of God in his glory. In the latter sense, God is known absolutely, intimately, because he is indwelt. In The Cloud of Unknowing, however, the distinction between the energies and the essence of God, as it is understood in the East, does not appear. The argument is rather that God cannot be known to the flesh, including the intellect; but can be known directly to the soul in his essence through love. We now have what is a Platonic argument: that the soul must break through

the realm of sense (nature) to the world of spirit (the divine "darkness") through love.

The latter argument is found elsewhere in the West: It underlies much of Augustine's thought, and is to be found explicitly, as Butler points out, in the writings of St. Gregory.²¹ It is also typical of many western theologians who attempt to understand Dionysian thought. Eckhardt will develop the idea that God cannot be "known" at all, because he is above "knowledge". Here he follows St. Thomas, who argues that while the blessed see the essence of God, the intellect cannot comprehend God, who is of a different order of being from our own.²² In Butler's view, this is the "Platonic" idea, rejected by earlier western mystics, that God cannot be known at all except by what he is not. The so-called "western" tradition, by contrast, is that God can be known as he reveals himself: as the cloud of "darkness" is pierced by contemplative prayer, and by the grace of God himself.

In its modifications of Dionysius' thought, The Cloud may thus be seen to combine certain ideas of Pseudo-Dionysius (meanwhile altering his meaning) with concepts already available in the West. Dom Knowles comments on the author's claim to have presented Dionysius' thought exactly:²³

This...is not precisely true. In the first place, no one in his position and indeed no medieval scholar or theologian of any kind could have grasped the outlook and meaning of the Syrian monk of the early sixth century. Those who read him, with implicit trust

21 Butler, Western Mysticism, op. cit., pp. 88-89; it is to be found in Gregory's Morals. See also Colledge, op. cit., p. 44.

22 e.g., Summa I, Q. 12. Thomas cites Augustine as his authority.

23 Knowles, English Mystical Tradition, op. cit., p. 73.

in his sub-apostolic authority, transformed his teaching into something compatible with their own theological and spiritual background. Next, the author of The Cloud did not read Denis in the original Greek, but in two medieval Latin translations, those of Johannes Sarracenus (d. 1160) and Thomas Gallus (d. 1240), assisted by the latter's commentary...

The subtle alteration of Dionysian thought, through its various western commentaries, culminating in The Cloud, will be important when we assess its influence on Julian's theology in the Revelations.

Julian and Pseudo-Dionysius: An Alternative View

Against the background of Rolle, Hilton and The Cloud, all of whom are taken to be influenced to some degree by Dionysian thought, Julian has consistently failed to attract attention as an original theologian in her own right. It is assumed that she, like the others, combined elements of her own "western" heritage with elements of Neoplatonism derived through The Cloud, or perhaps through St. Thomas or the Victorine mystics. She does not pursue their arguments, however, regarding the nature of contemplative prayer on the one hand (as striving towards the "spiritual" plane, in purgation, illumination and union), nor of mystical knowledge (the divine "unknowing" of The Cloud) nor even of the direct apprehension of God in love which is described by Rolle, in his "heat and song". Nevertheless, Julian is seen by some critics to weakly recapitulate Hilton's theology, perhaps in a unique way. This position is summed up by Martin Thornton in his English Spirituality:²⁴

Like Hilton, Julian perfectly expressed the English spiritual tradition because she is not in the least bit insular; rather she combines all the strands of our patristic lineage into a synthesis altogether new. Hilton

²⁴ Thornton, op. cit., p. 203.

and Julian teach the same thing, but whereas the former is guiding an anchoress, the latter is living the anchorite life; the one guides according to English spirituality, the other prays in the tradition itself...Here is the same Augustinian-Victorine basis, the affective Christology of St. Bernard, and the supreme English source of Benedictine optimism flowing from a rather more pronounced Thomist element...

Other writers have emphasized the mutual dependence of Hilton and Julian on the Dionysian ideas reflected in The Cloud, and developed by the Victorines in their understanding of St. Augustine. The argument is that all of these writers are Platonic in outlook, owing to Dionysius' influence on their thought. That Julian, too, is in some sense a Platonic writer is frequently assumed by modern students, and was perhaps best argued by one of her editors, Grace Warrack. In a classic passage, which evidently lies behind certain recent commentaries, Miss Warrack writes:²⁵

Julian's mystical views seem in part to be cognate with those of earlier and later systems based on Plato's philosophy, and especially perhaps on his doctrine of Love as reaching through the beauties of created things higher and higher to union with the Absolute Beauty above, which is God--schemes of thought developed before her and in her time by Plotinus, Clement, Augustine, Dionysius "the Areopagite," John the Scot /Eriugena/, Eckhardt, the Victorines, Ruysbroeck, and others...Possibly the learned Austin Friars that were settled close to St. Julian's in Conisford may have lent her books by some of these writers, or she may have been influenced through talks with a Confessor, or with some of the Flemish weavers of Norwich, with whom Mystical views were not uncommon.

There are two primary reasons for challenging Miss Warrack's interpretation of Julian, and therefore (by implication) the idea that Julian follows

²⁵ Warrack, p. xliii. Cf. Coleman, op. cit., p. 149: "In her treatment of the Trinity she is specially versatile and profound, and here Neoplatonic influence can be traced." (Coleman does not elaborate.) A remarkably straightforward remark, which dispatches Julian into the Platonic dustbin without ado, is found in Inge, William Ralph, Studies of English Mystics, John Murray, London, 1906, p. 66: "Julian is not a metaphysician, and we need not go more deeply into the speculations with which she here shows some acquaintance. The doctrine of the impeccability of the higher Self is Neo-Platonic, and carries with it a whole system of philosophy and ethics."

directly in a line established by Hilton and The Cloud. First, a careful comparison of Julian's Revelations with works by the authors cited above--from Plotinus to Julian's contemporary Ruysbroeck--will show fundamental differences in outlook which prevent her from being too easily classified with them, certainly not as a Platonist. These differences will be more easily recognized once we have outlined Julian's theology. Meantime we note, with regard to Julian's literary influences in general and the influence of the Victorines in particular, the following remarks by a modern student of the Victorine mystics. Clare Kirchberger, in her translation of selections from Richard of Saint-Victor, reaches the conclusion that Victorines did not, in fact, influence Julian's theology as has been supposed:²⁶

Of Julian of Norwich one cannot postulate any literary sources, certainly Richard is wholly outside the field of her kind of spirituality. She must have heard or read much of S. Augustine and her preachers and confessors may have taught her a good deal of theology for she speaks often of the 'teaching of Holy Church' and compares its doctrines with what her revelations and her reflections on them have taught her. But neither the analysis of personal experiences of mystical prayer nor the conception of God as transcendent and unapproachable /two primary elements of Victorine thought/ fit in with her devotion to our Lord as the centre of her love and knowledge.

A second objection stems from the scholarship of recent Orthodox theologians, writing on the character of Dionysian thought as it is understood in the East. They have argued that, from the Middle Ages up to modern times, the character of Orthodox mysticism on the whole and of Pseudo-Dionysius in particular, has been misunderstood in the West altogether. This basic misunderstanding, in this view, has been to see the Orthodox Fathers predominantly in a Platonic and Neoplatonic light (from Plotinus and Clement, through Gregory

26 Kirchberger, Clare, trans., Richard of Saint-Victor: Selected Writings on Contemplation, Faber and Faber Ltd., London, 1942, pp. 72-73.

of Nyssa, to the Byzantine mystics of the 14th century); and therefore to distort and misrepresent their concept of the human relationships of God to man in Christ, and especially the nature of divine revelation.

A principal spokesman for the Orthodox on this subject has been Vladimir Lossky, in his important work The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church.²⁷ Another, more recent publication (posthumously edited and translated) is his The Vision of God, which specifically takes up the subject of divine revelation in the Eastern Fathers, and its interpretation in the West.²⁸ Although Lossky shows some tendency to over-react to western writers, there can be little doubt that his analysis of the contemplative vision of God in Orthodoxy (with its distinction between the essence and the "energies" of God) throws into question much of the critical apparatus of western writers up to the present day, especially in their approach to Byzantine theology, as it developed the concepts of Pseudo-Dionysius. One of Lossky's points is that, far from being a "Platonic writer with a tinge of Christianity", Pseudo-Dionysius was a "Christian thinker disguised as a Neoplatonist, a theologian very much aware of his task, which was to conquer the ground held by Neoplatonism by becoming a master of its philosophical method".²⁹

27 Lossky, Vladimir, The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church, James Clarke and Co. Ltd., Cambridge, 1957.

28 The Vision of God, tr. Asheleigh Moorhouse, The Faith Press, Bedfordshire, 1963. See also the more difficult collection of essays, In the Image and Likeness of God, ed. John Erickson and Thomas Bird, Mowbray and Co. Ltd., Oxford, 1974.

29 Lossky, Vision of God, op. cit., pp. 99-100. See also Meyendorff, John, Byzantine Theology, Mowbrays and Co. Ltd., Oxford, 1974, pp. 27-28 and passim.

It is not our task here to outline Orthodox mysticism, or to enter into any controversy regarding the "true" theology of Pseudo-Dionysius as the Orthodox understand it. We should be aware, however, that an alternative understanding of Dionysian theology suggests the need for a new look at the so-called "Platonic" influence (through Pseudo-Dionysius) on western medievals, including Julian. The assumption that Dionysian theology is Platonic has been ably challenged by Lossky, et. al. It follows, therefore, that if there are certain similarities between Julian and Pseudo-Dionysius, we must review the assumption that Julian, too, is a Platonic theologian.

We have already noted certain distinctions between the theology of Pseudo-Dionysius and that of the "Dionysian" Cloud of Unknowing. The differences are theologically important, but they are difficult for the westerner to appreciate. Nevertheless, one editor of Julian's Revelations, who does not seem to have been aware of the problems in interpreting Dionysian thought, has observed a greater similarity between Julian and Pseudo-Dionysius than between Julian and The Cloud. Sr. Anna Marie Reynolds, writing on certain literary influences on the Revelations, suggests that Julian is "quite likely" to have been familiar with the Mystical Theology of Pseudo-Dionysius, and that she may also have known the Divine Names.³⁰ She draws attention to Julian's use of the Dionysian concept of touch (epaphē) "signifying God's direct action on the soul"; to "her fondness of numbers"; and to Julian's reference to seeing God "in a poynte...by which syght I saw that he is in al thyng..." (ch. 11 of the Revelations). On the other hand, Sr. Reynolds concludes that "With The Cloud of

30 Reynolds, "Some Literary Influences", op. cit., pp. 6-7.

Unknowing the Revelations have little in common, despite the fact that both works deal primarily with the higher forms of mystical experience."³¹

We should be aware that Julian would not have known Dionysius' works in the Greek, in any case; she may have known them in the form of the Hid Diuinite, but almost certainly not in Latin. However, Sr. Reynolds' observation is significant in view of Lossky's proposal that Dionysian thought is not Platonic, even if many western mystics--particularly the author of the Cloud--understood him that way. If Lossky's view is correct, we may argue that Julian is not a Neoplatonist precisely because she has some affinities with Dionysian (or Orthodox) thought--because not even Dionysius is Platonic. On the other hand, she may be seen to differ from The Cloud on the very points in which it is Neoplatonic, because of the interpretation which it lays on Dionysian theology. Thus one might argue that the understanding of Julian which has characterized her as "Platonic" has been mistaken, roughly along the same lines that Orthodox contemplative writings in general have been misunderstood by western theologians.

If the Revelations is read in light of the Byzantine Fathers, it becomes clear that her theology is remarkably similar on a number of key points. Julian's "Orthodoxy" appears in: 1) her strong emphasis on the Persons of the Trinity, and their relationship; 2) her continuous references to the glory of Christ in the Transfiguration; 3) the concept that in faith man is "oned" to God (divinization, called theosis in Orthodoxy); 4) her Christocentric understanding of divine revelation and salvation; 5) her balanced approach to

31 Reynolds, S.G.L., p. xvi.

contemplative prayer and asceticism; and 6) her emphasis on the community of believers rather than on the individual in his relationship to God. All of these are evident to some extent in English medieval mysticism as a whole. But there are important differences between the mystics in the ways in which these themes are developed. Underlying Julian's concept of revelation is the assumption that while we cannot see God's being in himself, in Christ we can know God directly and absolutely as he is towards us--in a way which transfigures us, "ones" us to him. Hers is not a Thomist concept, i.e., that reason points the way to God, though we cannot know him fully. Nor does she argue that love admits us to the essence of God. Rather, she will draw a distinction between the "secret" in God which is not revealed (his being) and the "secret" which is revealed (his relationship towards us in Christ). This distinction is nearer to the Orthodox concept of the ousia and the energeia of God, knowing God apophatically and cataphatically, than it is to the concept of revelation which we find in The Cloud of Unknowing. And we shall see that none of these themes is developed by Julian in a way which we could call "Platonic".

Julian does not, in fact, argue that we must break through the world of sense in order to apprehend God in love, as Miss Warrack suggests; for to do so would require a Platonic division between the world of sense and the world of spirit--a dualism which is fundamental to Hilton's theology, and to that of The Cloud. Julian does not follow Hilton on this point at all: for her, the milieu of the Holy Spirit is precisely the world of sense--a marvellous concept which will be developed at length in this study, and which has already been observed by one of Julian's editors.³² As Miss Kirchberger notes, Julian

32 Walsh, James, ed., Pre-Reformation English Spirituality, Burns and Oates, London, c. 1961, p. 205.

does not see God as unapproachable, but to the contrary stresses his "homeliness" in love. She nowhere speaks of a "divine spark" within everyman, as do Eckhardt and his students, but she speaks specifically of the indwelling Christ in the Christian. The points of difference multiply, and will be explored further along. But we suggest meantime that Julian does not in any sense borrow from, or recapitulate, the Platonism of Plotinus, Clement and Origen, or of Eckhardt et al., but she will be seen to stand in direct contrast to them on their most important points. It is for this reason, and not because of insufficiency on her part, that she fails to develop fully the theology found in Hilton's works or in The Cloud. It is not because of oversight, but genuine difference in approach, that she never develops a concept of the "cloud" (she does not even use the word in the Revelations), just as she never mentions Eckhardt's "spark", nor the "darkness of unknowing" which has proved so popular to modern critics of the English mystical tradition.

Having made these observations, it will be important to recall the original purpose of this study: to make clear Julian's theology, rather than to engage in any purely historical arguments as to how her theology came about. We do not propose, for example, that there are any historical reasons for correlating Julian's thought with that of the Eastern divines; we merely note that Julian seems to have said many of the same things. It is extremely doubtful, almost to the point of impossibility, that Julian knew, for example, about the Palamite controversy regarding the nature of revelation (which nevertheless was contemporary with her) or that she had ever heard of the theology of the Cappadocians or the Byzantine mystics.³³ That there are similarities between

33 Lossky notes that Richard Fitzralph, Primate of Ireland and a contemporary of Julian, is aware of the theology of Palamas, and "blames...the

her theology and that of Gregory of Nyssa, John of Damascus, Maximus the Confessor, Gregory Palamas and other Eastern theologians, will be evident to those who are familiar with that tradition. It is an interesting point, but a largely implicit, and probably wholly unconscious, parallel development in theology. This reminds us, finally, of the character of Julian's theology as revelation, rather than as a scholastic exercise.

In Julian's Revelations, as with many Christian mystics, there is a revealed theology of divine Love. Julian is more eager to describe the contents of her divine revelation, than to analyze the nature of the visions by which it came; to pray, rather than to develop a theory of the stages of contemplative prayer. She achieves a perception of God, and a theological style, which is therefore arguably untypical of her own English medieval heritage; but if we choose to see Julian in this light (as more similar, say, to the Orthodox than to western mysticism) we do not infer that Julian borrowed from one "stream" of thought as opposed to another, or even was aware of a difference. Where Christian mystics are seen to say the same things, we should recall that their attention has been to the revelation which they received from the same God, through the same Lord Jesus Christ, in the same Spirit.

Julian and Western Mysticism

It has seemed necessary to direct our attention, for a moment, to the somewhat involved question of the nature of Dionysian theology, in order to evaluate the suggestion that Julian is a Neoplatonic mystic following the

Greeks for having denied the vision of the divine essence." (The Vision of God, op. cit., p. 18). The first "Palamite" council took place in Byzantium in 1341.

influence of "St. Denis" on her contemporaries. With regard to the "western" character of her thought--in the tradition of Augustine, Gregory, Bernard and others--the issues are even more complex. Earlier we noted that the English mystics are thought of as maintaining to some extent their own "western" tradition. A certain confusion exists, however, over what is meant by the "western" tradition; and over which theologians in the geographical West might actually have influenced Julian's thought.

It will already be clear that Dom Butler's assessment of the two "strands" in Christian mysticism, the eastern and western, is inadequate. That this view might be somewhat oversimplified was suggested early on by one of Dom Butler's editors. In a Foreword to Western Mysticism Dom David Knowles writes:³⁴

There is, in fact, no 'western mysticism' to oppose to an 'eastern' or 'post Reformation' mysticism. Rather, there is a single traditional teaching, from the New Testament to our day, of a Christian asceticism and illumination which was very early contaminated by the near-Christian teaching of Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophy. In the centuries that followed, this influence was present at different times in different degrees of strength, in the theoretical mystical teaching of the Victorines, in stronger force when the translation of Denis spread in the twelfth century, when Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas commented on him, and when Eckhardt created a system of Christianized Neoplatonism. It continued in lessening measure in the Rhineland mystical school and later in the Spanish mystics, where it is little more than vestigial.

In light of Lossky's criticism, it would be worthwhile to press Dom Knowles' assertion regarding the source of the "contamination" which he envisions--ultimately to suggest, perhaps, that it was due to misunderstanding in the West, deriving from the Platonic disposition of Augustine himself. Eric Colledge, writing on the English mystics, makes the point that Neoplatonism was already inherent in western mystical thought long before "St. Denis" made his

34 Western Mysticism, op. cit., p. xiv.

appearance there.³⁵ This is an issue which cannot be pursued in the present study; the point remains, however, that the handy distinction between "eastern" (Neoplatonic) mysticism and "western" has been called into question seriously. This requires us, therefore, to leave aside the whole concept of a "pure" mysticism in the West, simply to note some of the western theologians who have been put forward either as Julian's primary sources, or as characterizing her theology.

It is well known that St. Augustine remained a prominent influence on mystical thought at Julian's time. The more one is familiar with Augustine, the more it seems possible to detect Augustinian concepts in the Revelations. Julian appears to share several important aspects of Augustine's theology. She will develop the nature of the Trinity, for example, in terms of the Power, Wisdom, and Love of the Father, Son, and Spirit respectively. She will speak of the soul as a "made Trinity", in the image of God. She will view sin in terms of non-being, as does Augustine, and develop the whole idea of felix culpa--that sin is "behovable" or necessary in order for there to be salvation. We shall see, however, that Julian's development of these themes does not exactly parallel St. Augustine's: she may speak of the Persons of the Trinity, but she does not treat them in Augustine's way; she sees the soul as trinitarian, but it is not the trinity of "conscience, memory, will" which we find in Augustine; she never mentions "St. Austin", and her concept of sin may as easily derive from St. Paul. At the same time, we need to recall that virtually every western theologian before Julian's time discusses the same themes

35 Colledge, op. cit., p. 45.

(of the Trinity, the nature of the soul, the nature of sin)--with certain similarities in their conclusions being unavoidable. Thus to say that Julian studied Augustine, or has an Augustinian point of view, is both an obvious point, and a relatively meaningless one which may even be misleading. To the present, no direct quotations from Augustine have been identified in the Revelations; but even if there were clear references to his works, it would still be difficult to demonstrate whether Julian got them from Augustine directly, or simply from the common teaching of her time, in sermons and in conversation. Meantime, to look for them may distract us from the content of the Revelations itself.

The same general argument applies to a host of other "western" sources which have been suggested for the Revelations. As Miss Kirchberger points out, it is virtually impossible to demonstrate any definite literary sources for Julian's theology--first because none is quoted by her, and second because her approach to theology is unique, and is therefore difficult to classify.³⁶ Some of the theologians who have been suggested as sources behind the Revelations include St. Benedict (as known either through the Benedictine Rule, or through St. Gregory's Life), SS. Cassian, Gregory, Bernard, Thomas Aquinas, Anselm, Bonaventure, William of St.-Thierry, and the Victorines (Hugh and Victor). The exercise of locating "sources" could be expanded indefinitely, since it appears to be limited only by the particular mystics with whom the modern writer is familiar. A similarity, however, does not necessarily imply a source. One interesting example of this phenomenon is to be found by comparing Julian with the Spanish mystic of the previous century, Ramón Lull.

A close comparison between Lull and Julian has not previously appeared in

36 See p. 101 above.

the literature, and therefore it provides us with a fresh example of how such comparisons tend to work. There are many points of similarity, but we cite only one: In Lull's romantic composition, The Blanquerna, we have what appears to be the direct inspiration for a passage in Julian's Revelations. Lull writes:³⁷

They asked the Lover: "Whence art thou?" He answered: "From Love." "To whom doest thou belong?" "I belong to love." "Who gave thee birth?" "Love." "Where wast thou born?" "In love." "Who brought thee up?" "Love." "How dost thou live?" "By love." "What is thy name?" "Love." "Whence comest thou?" "From love." "Whither goest thou?" "To love." "Where dwellest thou?" "In love..."

The words seem fresh in Julian's memory when she develops them as follows:

"What, wouldst thou know thy Lord's meaning in this thing? Know it well. Love was his meaning. Who sheweth it thee? Love. Wherefore sheweth it thee? For Love. Hold thee therein. Thou shalt know more in the same, but thou shalt never know other therein, without end." (ch. 86, p. 209).

The particular problem with this comparison, which seems plausible enough, is that while Ramon Lull often wrote in Latin, he composed The Blanquerna in the Spanish dialect known as Catalán. While it is possible that a Catalán-reading equivalent of Margery Kempe managed to reach Julian with news of Lull's treatise, it seems improbable.

A similar objection has been made by Eric Colledge, with regard to Julian's knowledge of Continental mysticism in general and of women visionaries in particular. It is worth quoting at length:³⁸

We have often been reminded of this East Anglian piety, in recent years almost to the point of weariness, and many suggestions have been made concerning its special susceptibility to the influences

37 Lull, Ramon, Blanquerna: A Thirteenth Century Romance, tr. E. Allison Peers, Jarrolds Publishers, London, c. 1925, p. 426.

38 Colledge, op. cit., p. 83.

of Continental mysticism, because of the constant traffic of the thriving merchant towns between the Thames and Humber estuaries with the Low Countries, a traffic to which Margery Kempe's biography is so interesting a witness. But there is rarely positive evidence to support these suggestions, merely an accumulation of detail showing possibility and suggesting probability; and usually facts, when these can be found, show that Continental mystical writings, when they did become known in England, came in Latin versions brought by members of the religious orders. We know that the Carthusians, in particular, were very active in this work of dissemination. Without doubt Julian of Norwich, of whom we must think most in considering East Anglian piety, was helped by the words of others in the formation of her extraordinary spirituality: but we know nothing of how she was helped, or by whom, and it is not necessary to argue that because she is the one English woman mystic and visionary, she must have had knowledge of her counterparts abroad such as Mechtild of Magdeburg or Bidget of Sweden. Part of Julian's greatness is her exceptional independence of such external influence, that her "Revelations" are a singularly pure distillation of her own experiences of mystical rapture, sanctified by long years of prayerful meditation.

A still more immediate example of the problems involved in citing sources is to be seen in comparing the text of the Revelations with Hilton's works. In her edition of The Goad of Love, Clare Kirchberger notes Hilton's image of sin blackening the soul (ch. 20); and she poses the question whether Hilton might be thinking of Julian's vision, in ch. 10 of the Revelations, in which she saw Jesus' face "brown and black" (p. 63).³⁹ The difficulty here is that Hilton died in 1395, only two years after the earliest date (according to the Revelations) in which Julian could have written her book. The phrase does not occur in the Shorter Version. Hilton's works have never been dated with certainty; however, the Goad of Love is dated by Miss Kirchberger to the last twenty years of Hilton's life, before he wrote Book II of the Scale of Perfection--in her estimation, between about 1381 and 1388.⁴⁰ These dates are, of

39 Kirchberger, The Goad of Love, op. cit. p. 135 .

40 Ibid, pp. 21-22.

course, at least five years before the Revelations; and the alternative, if Hilton did borrow from Julian, is that he must have seen her in Norwich or read her book sometime in 1393, after which he composed The Goad, after which he wrote Book II of the Scale. The point is that this kind of speculation is of very little value, and in any case can result in impossibilities, as here. We note in passing that in The Scale, ch. 21, Hilton uses the phrase "all shall be right well"--exactly quoting (or giving rise to) one of the most famous of Julian's phrases in the Revelations.⁴¹ But if there were really a direct relationship between these two texts, the direction of influence would be impossible to tell.

These examples illustrate the way in which texts may be too easily applied to one another, for the doubtful purpose of demonstrating sources or common theological characteristics. It would require far more space than its worth to give similar examples from each of Julian's proposed "sources", in which similarities have been discovered in only a few words shared between the Revelations and some other writer. The point will be equally well made by noting the way in which modern critics have categorized Julian in broader terms of influence, *i.e.* in terms of the various Orders and their individual theological characteristics.

On the basis of the argument, for example, that Julian is "most akin to Walter Hilton, her contemporary" (as Miss Warrack has it),⁴² one might describe her as Augustinian in outlook--especially as Hilton was a noted Augustinian scholar. On the other hand, Conrad Pepler, another student of Julian,

⁴¹ Underhill, *op. cit.* p. 48; cf. Revelations, ch. 27 (p. 91).

⁴² Warrack, p. xlv.

sees her not as an Augustinian so much as a Thomist: he observes that "It is as though she had been a student of St. Thomas' Prima Pars for the greater part of her life".⁴³ Later on he concludes that:

...her outlook has a Dominican flavour, for although her insistence is naturally all upon Love, she sees it always in terms of understanding and she looks forward constantly to the vision of heaven (cf. cc. 36 and 44). She may have had a Dominican confessor or director. /emphas
sis his

Martin Thornton, following Paul Molinari and others, would depict the Revelations in still another light:⁴⁴

The Whole is pervaded with a plain Benedictine spirit, which, as Molinari points out, may be due in part to her association with the Benedictines at Carrow, but this cannot be the only influence. Not only her optimism, but her prudence and "domestic" doctrine of the Church, all imply that Benedictinism inherent in all English spirituality.

Meanwhile, we have already suggested that Julian's Christocentrism (like Walter Hilton's) may be described as "Franciscan". Indeed, Julian may be seen to develop Franciscan thought (prior to Ockham) in several ways: In her concept of the Trinity in relation to time (i.e. that God exists outside time, but nevertheless pervades space and time); in her concern for all of nature, as "all that God loves" (ch. 5, etc.); in her desire for union with Christ; and notably in her concept of God's universal love for all human beings, raising the question whether our temporal view of divine judgement (and the doctrine of damnation) is accurate.⁴⁵

⁴³ Pepler, op. cit., pp. 306 and 310.

⁴⁴ Thornton, op. cit., p. 205

⁴⁵ Cf. Bonafide, Giulio, Il Pensiero Francese nel Secolo XIII, G. Mori & Figli, Palermo, 1952. Particular points of similarity to be noted are with Roger of Marston, Questiones Disputatae IV and V (pp. 200-201, above) regarding the continuous motion within the Trinity, and the relationship between a theology of the Trinity and an understanding of creation; with Richard of Middleton, and with Ramon Lull, as they are presented in this article.

Finally, several critics--chiefly represented by Molinari and by Walsh, in the introduction to his edition--depict Julian as a kind of precursor to the Spanish Carmelites, SS. Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross. Despite his warning that we ought not to enter too readily into comparisons, Molinari spends much of his time demonstrating the Catholicity of Julian's Revelations in terms of much later developments in mystical theology. Although the title of his book (Julian of Norwich: The Teaching of a 14th Century English Mystic) implies the whole teaching of Julian, Molinari confines himself to her doctrine of contemplative prayer, as he understands it, and the nature of Julian's visions. In his analysis, he begins by accepting outright Butler's dichotomy between East and West. His task is then to show that Julian's concept of prayer is not Platonic, but that it is orthodox--i.e., "western"; and that her visions are "genuine" ones. Molinari sees her principally as concerned with the later stages of contemplative prayer, or spiritual progress, rather in the way that Walter Hilton develops them in the Scale. These are described, however, not even in terms of English spirituality contemporary with Julian, but in terms of comparatively recent commentaries on the stages of Christian "perfection". These, in turn, concentrate almost entirely on the Carmelites, especially on the theology of St. John of the Cross.⁴⁶

In depicting Julian's theology in terms of Spanish Carmelite mysticism of the sixteenth century, Molinari only recapitulates at greater length an idea found in other commentaries on Julian. One is reminded of Dom Butler's

⁴⁶ Molinari, op. cit. Molinari chiefly cites French authorities on the stages of the mystical journey, e.g., J. De Guibert, R. Garrigou-Lagrange, J. Leclercq, A. Poulain, P. Pourrat, A. Sandreau. His commentary is interspersed with quotations from the Spanish Carmelites, and observations regarding their mysticism.

complaint, in Western Mysticism, that he is unable to find works which describe certain theologians without reference to other ones. Referring to a debate this century concerning the nature of mystical or contemplative prayer, he writes:⁴⁷

Poulain and Farges very nearly take St. Teresa as practically the final authority, who has spoken the last word, and almost the first word, on the degrees of prayer; and this though she often protests that she relates only what happened to herself, that different souls are led by God in different ways, so that what she exposes is only a way, not the way, and is not to be made into a general law. The Dominican writers are disposed to take St. Thomas, St. John of the Cross, and St. Teresa, as their authorities; but even this, I venture to think, affords too narrow a basis on which to erect the structure of mystical theology.

Fr. Walsh, too, is content with St. John of the cross as the touch-stone for Julian's theology, adding St. Thomas where he seems relevant. Again, Dom Butler's comments may be brought to bear:⁴⁸

I have to confess to an abiding uneasy sense when reading the Dominican writers as to whether St. Thomas has in mind really the same thing as St. John and the mystics pure and simple. It would be a great contribution to the study of mysticism if some Dominican theologian were to draw out in set form a bare statement of what St. Thomas says on the act of contemplation itself and on union, without bringing it into relation with St. Teresa or St. John or any other mystics...

In our case, there are few "bare statements" of Julian's theology apart from both Thomas and John of the Cross. It is curious that a major occupation of Molinari, Walsh and others is to classify Julian's visions themselves according to one or another of the scholastics. Molinari assumes that the Carmelites accurately describe all the stages of contemplation, and he is particularly concerned to show that Julian adheres to the Augustinian classifications of visions (accepted by Thomas, and the whole western tradition thereafter) as "corporeal", "imaginary" and "intellectual". Perhaps because he is

⁴⁷ Butler, Western Mysticism, op. cit., p. xxxv.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. xlii.

persuaded, following Butler, that truly Catholic mystics are unconcerned with supernatural phenomena (that is, with physical manifestations) he is at great pains to prove that none of Julian's sixteen visions was "corporeal"--but only imaginary, or intellectual, or some combination of the two.⁴⁹

Although it is already somewhat perplexing to enter Julian's thought with the idea that she is an Augustinian-Dominican-Benedictine-Franciscan-Carmelite, at least one other source for her theology has been suggested, with some justification. Several writers have noted points of similarity between Julian and St. Anselm, particularly with relation to Julian's concept of atonement, her prayers for the three "wounds" (of contrition, compassion, and longing for God) and her concept of Christ as our Mother (found scattered throughout the Revelations).⁵⁰ The source behind these points of similarity is not Anselm's better-known treatises, such as Cur Deus Homo, but his popular devotional works. Sr. Benedicta Ward, who has recently published an English edition of the Prayers and Meditations, points out that it is impossible to know in what form Anselm's works might have been available in Julian's time--i.e., whether

49 Molinari, op. cit., pp. 60-70 and passim. See also Reynolds, SGL pp. xliv-xlix; and Knowles, Religious Orders in England, op. cit., pp. 122-123. Knowles regards Hilton, The Cloud, and Julian together as exponents of the (future) Carmelite mysticism of St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross.

50 Colledge, op. cit., p. 87: "Her theology, in her description of the Son-servant who is at once Adam the gardener and the Redeemer, is that of Anselm and Hilton..." A short study is by Ward, Sr. Benedicta, S. L.G., "Faith Seeking Understanding: Anselm of Canterbury and Julian of Norwich", in Julian of Norwich: Four Studies to Commemorate the Sixth Centenary of the Revelations of Divine Love, S.L.G. Press, Oxford, 1973 (available from S.L.G. Press, Convent of the Incarnation, Fairacres, Oxford OX4 1TB). See also Molinari, op. cit., pp. 169-176; and Knowles, English Mystical Tradition, op. cit., p. 128.

as acknowledged to be by Anselm, or buried in anthologies--and even whether they were available in English, which she regards as unlikely.⁵¹ Probably Julian was familiar with Anselmic ideas, rather than with Anselm. There seems little doubt, however, that she would have been aware of a roughly "Anselmic" doctrine of salvation, as it was still taught in the Church. This would have included the idea that Christ is our Judge; and that the debt of sin which we eternally owe to God was repaid only by the death of Christ on our behalf. We shall see, however, that on this point the Revelations appears to challenge Anselm directly.⁵²

That there are problems associated with characterizing Julian's theology in terms of other theologians' works should now be evident. It would be much better, following Butler's suggestion regarding St. Thomas, to simply outline what Julian says without bringing other mystical theology into the discussion. Then, as Molinari points out, it will be possible to make comparisons between Julian and her English contemporaries, and between her theology and that of Catholic mysticism as a whole.

51 Sr. Ward concludes that there was probably not any actual dependence by Julian upon Anselm's own works, first because Julian could not read them (since they would have been available only in Latin) and second, because they were not available as an identifiable corpus until the present century ("Faith Seeking Understanding", *op. cit.*, p. 26). See also Ward, Benedicta, trans., The Prayers and Meditations of Saint Anselm, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1973, p. 67.

52 See below, p. 265 f.

CHAPTER THREE: THREE MANNERS OF CHARITY

The Thematic Structure of the Revelations

Julian tells us that she wrote her book so that her "even-christians" would grasp the significance of her visions for their own lives. On the other hand, she was not concerned to write a formal argument, or dogmatic outline, of her own theology. It is not even clear that she could have done so if she wanted, or that she was aware of having a "theology" of her own, different from anyone else's. She saw herself as an ordinary Christian, not as a theologian, who nevertheless was given extraordinary insight in her visions--and who was obligated to share them. She understood what they would mean to the faithful who read about them: They were "revelations of divine love"; and in fact they form a coherent theology of the Love of God, meant to comfort us and to give a clearer knowledge of the Love which is God, and its meaning for our own lives. This insight did not come to Julian immediately, however. In her final chapter, she remarks that after seeing the visions she often wondered what was their real point. After more than fifteen years she was answered "in ghostly understanding":

What, wouldst thou know thy Lord's meaning in this thing? Know it well, Love was his meaning. Who sheweth it thee? Love. Wherefore sheweth he it thee? For Love. Hold thee therein. Thou shalt know more in the same, but thou shalt never know other therein, without end. (ch. 86, p. 209)

In her desire to give what one scribe calls "comfortable words" (in the Prologue to the Shorter Version) Julian avoids technical language--if indeed she knew any--and confines herself more or less to the content of the visions themselves. In this, she may be seen to reflect a certain anti-intellectualism characteristic of the English mystics of her time.¹ On a deeper level, however,

1 Pantin, op. cit., p. 251.

she shares with many mystics of the Church (in the East and the West) who would rather pray than to define the stages of prayer, or to exhibit faith rather than to analyze it. Dom Butler terms this kind of mysticism "pre-scholastic", since his subjects (Augustine, Bernard and Gregory) predate the great scholastics of the West. Julian, of course, does not; but his basic assessment applies to her as well. Writing on the development of scholasticism in the West, Dom Butler observes:²

...a speculative and philosophical treatment of the subject [of contemplation], according to the principles of the Platonic or Aristotelean philosophies was introduced, and this process was carried forward by the great scholastics, so that mystical theology tended more and more to become a science of contemplation rather than contemplation itself, an intellectual system rather than a religious experience. The difference between this manner of treatment, and that which we have found in St. Bernard and St. Gregory, and St. Augustine too, is very apparent. In them there is no philosophizing about contemplation, no thought of systematizing or schematization. All they aim at doing is to describe as best they can the personal experiences of their soul.

Because Julian is a contemplative writer on this order, describing her visions rather than engaging in scholastic arguments, it is up to us to single out her main points and to arrange them in some kind of logical order.

Various attempts have been made to systematize the Revelations by seeing a logical progression of thought develop through the chapters. On the whole, however, this kind of approach seems to impose a structure on the Revelations which is not really there. Julian's narration is in fact repetitious and sometimes haphazard. She describes the order of events in her visions, as she remembers them, without seeing in them a logical sequence, and without attempting to categorize them by subject-matter. She recapitulates her main ideas more than once, and as it has somewhere been observed, it is possible to begin

2 Butler, Western Mysticism, op. cit., p. 252.

reading the Revelations at almost any point without noticing that anything needs to have gone before. It would appear that the organization of the Revelations is therefore not deductive (as one would expect in a scholastic work) but what we might call "thematic": that is, there are central themes which relate to one another in particular ways, and which can be thought about in a particular order, although Julian does not necessarily do so. Almost any chapter of the book touches on its main themes, while portions of the book dwell more on one theme than another; but all the themes are closely related and imply the others.

The thematic structure of the Revelations is simple, and is suggested to us by Julian herself. She is broadly concerned with three main areas of Christian theology: the nature of God as he is in himself (the doctrine of the Trinity); the nature of God as he relates to man in Christ (the doctrine of the incarnation and atonement); and the nature of man's response to God in Christ (the doctrine of the Church--or, perhaps, what we might call life "in the Holy Spirit"). These are implied in the first sentence of the book, where Julian tells us that all her visions grew out of the first one, of Christ's bleeding head crowned with thorns:

The first [shewing] is of his precious crowning of thorns; and therein was contained and made manifest the Blessed Trinity with the Incarnation and the unity between God and man's soul, with many fair shewings and teachings of endless wisdom and love; in which the shewings that follow are grounded and oned. (ch. 1, p. 45).

There are two important points in this first statement. One is the movement from the face of Christ (which she sees in the crucifix) to the Trinity, and back again: In her vision of Christ "was contained and made manifest the Blessed Trinity..."; but in the vision of the Trinity she sees the Incarnation, and the bond between God and man's soul. This movement is central to the whole

of the Revelations and will underlie all that Julian has to say. Whatever she knows of the hidden Godhead is shown to her in the body of the crucified Christ; and whenever she looks upon his body, she sees God.

Second, Julian immediately suggests the principal theses of her book in her phrase, "the Blessed Trinity with the Incarnation and the unity between God and man's soul". There are three elements here, not two. We may see in them a progression from God to man, beginning with the Trinity, moving to the Incarnation, and then to the bond between God and man which is realized in man's soul itself. That Julian actually has such a movement in mind is demonstrated towards the end of the Revelations, when she sums up the main themes of her sixteen visions once again. She describes three aspects of divine Love (or Charity) in the Revelations:

I had three manners of understandings in this light of charity. The first is charity unmade; the second is charity made; the third is charity given. Charity unmade is God: charity made is our soul in God: charity given is the virtue. And that is a gracious gift, in the working of which we love God for himself and ourselves in God and all that God loveth, for God. (ch. 84, p. 207).

The concepts of charity "uncreated", "created" and "given" are not unique to Julian; they were employed in her time to refer to God (charity unmade), to the contemplative life (charity made--i.e., God-wards love created by God in the soul properly disposed towards him), and to the active life (charity given--the "virtue" of loving).³ What is unique is the way in which Julian understands

3 Cf. Book II of Hilton's Scale, 33:

"Holy writers say, and sooth it is, that there is two manner of ghostly love. One is called unformed, another is called formed. Love unformed is God himself, the third Person in the Trinity; that is, the Holy Ghost. He is love unformed and unmade, as Saint John saith thus: Deus dilectio est. God is love, that is, the Holy Ghost. Love formed is the affection

these themes, not to refer to the contemplative and active lives, but to the relationship which God has to all men, in Christ. We shall see that, for her, the nature of the Trinity is divine Love: the three Persons bound together in an indwelling relationship of Love which is a profound mystery. At the same time, the mystery of divine Love is revealed in the Incarnation, in which God dwells in man, and is made man. Thus when Julian speaks of "our soul in God", she is not referring to a contemplative experience--of feeling caught up in the divine, for example--but to the objective relationship of indwelling, God in man and man in God. Specifically, it is the Incarnation, the Person of Jesus, who is the bond between God and humanity. Julian calls it, therefore, the "unity between God and man's soul" (ch. 1). Finally, the gift of Charity (the virtue of loving) is a manifestation of God's presence in us, reflecting the divine Love of the Trinity. We are enabled to love because we are loved, and because divine Love dwells in us.

The whole of the Revelations is concerned with these three points, repeating them again and again in different ways, but always referring to the double movement from Christ to the Trinity, and from the Trinity to Christ. At the same time Julian depicts the movement from Divine Love to the love which is made possible in man, and which finally is reflected back to God because of God's gift of love to us. It is in this movement that we may think of the Revelations not so much as a treatise but more as a meditation, or perhaps a kind of painting. Its arrangement is like that of an icon (we may think of Roublev's

of the soul, made by the Holy Ghost of the sight and the knowing of soothfastness, that is God only, stirred and set in him. This love is called formed, for it is made by the Holy Ghost." (Underhill, op. cit., p. 381).

famous icon of the Trinity):⁴ there are three principal elements; and although our eye begins with one of them (the face of Christ, in whom we see the Father, in the Spirit), we must consider the picture as a whole, always moving from one point to the others, as we are directed by the picture. The investigation of Julian's theology which follows is arranged, therefore, after the three elements of divine Love which Julian saw in her visions: of the Love which is God, the love which is given to us in Christ, and the experience of love which is ours in Christ, as we are enabled to love by him.

Characteristics of Julian's Theology

By looking at the shape of the Revelations it is already possible to discern a chief characteristic of Julian's theology. It is what might be called relational thought, as opposed to sequential or "compartmental" thought. That is, every element of Julian's thought interpenetrates the others, and implies the others, in such a way that the whole of her thought is intimately related. She will not be able, therefore, to speak of the Trinity without immediately speaking of the Incarnation; or to speak of the Incarnation without speaking of humanity, and man's relationship to God; or of humanity, without speaking of the indwelling Holy Spirit; and so on. This has an important bearing on her concept of the "spiritual" or contemplative life.

Spiritual progression towards God in contemplation was universally understood, in Julian's time, to be like a movement up a ladder: a steady progression towards God in stages, like rungs. This, in turn, implied a kind of hierarchy among persons who are engaged in the "spiritual" life--not to mention those who are not yet engaged in the life of contemplative prayer, and

⁴ All three figures in this icon (of the "angels" in Genesis 18:1-15) have identical features, i.e. the face of Christ. Their arrangement creates a triangle of continuous motion in the centre of the icon.

so have not begun their ascent. We shall see, however, that Julian does not use this image in the Revelations at all--not because she assumed it or has no need to mention it, but because it is incompatible with her way of thinking, and the development of the Revelations as a whole.⁵ For her, our progression towards God is more like a circular movement, or perhaps a spiral. In our relationship to God we grow, but we do not cease to sin, or to repeat the errors we have already made. In a sense, we learn the same lessons over and over again in different ways. Neither is there a hierarchy among Christians--those who are more "spiritual" than others--because all Christians are related to God as his children. We are all different, and experience different stages of maturity; but we are all the same in his Love.

This dimension of Julian's thought gives rise, then, to another: she sees our relationship to God as that of children to their parents, both to their father and to their mother--not as a "legal" relationship, or one which in any way can be depicted impersonally. We shall see that unlike St. Anselm or St. Thomas, or many of the western scholastics, she does not develop a sense of our legal relationship to God--i.e., that we must do certain things in order to avoid God's punishment, or even that the crucifixion has taken place because of the need for divine justice. Rather, hers is a theology of human growth, or maturity in the Spirit. Salvation (which she depicts more as "healing") takes place when we relate to God as we are meant to--that is, properly, as his children.⁶ Our Father creates us out of Love, and keeps us in

5 See below, pp. 283 ff.

6 Thornton, op. cit., p. 210, sees in Julian's doctrine of atonement "a racial solidarity theory similar to that of St. Bernard". While there are affinities with Bernard in the Revelations, it should become clear that Julian's doctrine of atonement is her own, prompted by a shared love for Jesus in the Spirit as Bernard's, but drawn on different lines.

that Love. Jesus is our Mother, loving us, caring for us, calling us to follow him. Even divine wrath, as Julian understands it, will be seen wholly within the context of the divine Love which our Mother has for her children. Although she does not refer to the scriptures here (and we cannot be sure that she knew them), her imagery recalls that of the Old Testament, where God is depicted as the Mother of Israel who gave birth to her, and reared her, in Love; and it is suggested in the New Testament too, when Jesus speaks to Jerusalem as the mother hen who would care for her chicks. (Matt. 23:37).

That Julian is able to speak of Jesus as our divine Mother has attracted a certain amount of attention from critics in recent years.⁷ There is no question that she develops a uniquely feminine theology, though not in the personal sense of many other female mystics (whose imagery is often sexual or erotic), but in the sense of analogy, in understanding the Being of God; and in the sense that her whole concept of salvation is governed by her womanhood. She does not speak merely of her personal relationship to Christ in feminine terms, as does Margery Kempe or certain of her contemporaries; but she sees the relationship of the whole Church to God in this light. The Church is Jesus' "darling", his "beloved", his bride. Jesus is our "lover and keeper". When Jesus speaks to Julian in intimate terms--"darling daughter", "my love", "my child",--it always implies more than Julian, to show God's love for his whole people. This, in turn, reflects for Julian the feminine aspect of God's being towards

7 Cf. Sr. Mary Paul, S.L.G., All Shall Be Well: Julian of Norwich and the Compassion of God, SLG Press, Oxford, 1975 (booklet available from SLG Press); McLaughlin, Eleanor, "'Christ My Mother': Feminine Naming and Metaphor in Medieval Spirituality", in The Saint Luke Journal of Theology (Special Issue), Vol. XVIII, No. 4, September 1975, pp. 228-248. See below, pp. 262 ff.

us, as divine Mother. It has been noted that this idea appears in St. Paul, and is emphasized by Bernard of Clairveaux and certain medieval women mystics, and is found in the East: there, even the Holy Spirit is sometimes referred to in feminine terms, notably by Gregory of Nyssa.⁸

This concept is extremely important, because it challenges the whole juridical approach to salvation which has appeared in the West--looking upon the human relationship to God in impersonal, legalistic terms of justice, righteousness, repentance, and so on; and points again to an older tradition, of the soft but strong intimate relationship of a mother for her children, or a lover for his beloved.

Next, Julian develops the idea of growth in God's love as the meaning of "salvation". For her, our fullest human state is life in the Spirit of God, being indwelt by him. Therefore she does not speak of human relationships to God in "either/or" terminology--either "saved" or "not saved"--but in terms of love-relationships, or maturity in love. She confines her remarks to Christians only, in this regard (whom she calls "Christ's lovers", or "souls-to-be-saved") because her visions did not touch on the relationship of non-Christians to Christ. But she sees that we relate to our heavenly Father sometimes as little children who need punishment and chiding; sometimes as helpless children who need rescuing; sometimes as wrathful children, who are nevertheless loved though we refuse to love; and sometimes as mature children, or even as a beloved wife, who can return love as it is given. Underlying her concept of growth in the Holy Spirit, which is growth in divine Love, is a remarkable idea which needs

8 Sr. Mary Paul, *ibid.*, pp. 29-39; McLaughlin, *ibid.*, pp. 232-243.

to be heard today: that only love compels love in others, and creates maturity. God commands and punishes, but only in love; and it is his tenderness that draws us to him. Julian will develop this idea implicitly regarding human relationships: that we cannot elicit love from others by commanding them to love, or by judging them, but only by sharing the love that we have received ourselves, from God.

Finally, and most important, is Julian's whole understanding of "mystical" theology--that is, of our involvement in God, through the grace of God. Two points will be made here: First, Julian does not make a Platonic separation between body and soul. She is concerned, rather, with whole persons, as one living union of body/soul. The milieu of the Holy Spirit is not merely our "soul", nor our "spirit" nor our "mind", but our entire selves. Julian will lay great emphasis on the Incarnation as the entry of God into the world in the flesh; and she will speak again and again of the importance of the Son's humanity in his relationship to us. She is not concerned, therefore, to soar above the flesh, as it were, to reach God (a concept which we find in mysticism of all kinds, in Julian's age and also in our own); but to meet God as he offers himself to her, an incarnate and crucified, risen and glorified Lord.

The second point follows: Julian's mysticism is at once ascetical, but not world-denying; a theology grounded in the world, but not of the world. She will argue that the Christian must give himself wholly to the Lord, who demands holiness and who hates sin. The soul, she says repeatedly, will never be satisfied merely with the world. Nevertheless, the Lord who desires our love is the same Lord who made and keeps all things, and loves all things, and who has given us the world itself (what Julian calls "kind", or nature) to enjoy in his Love. This is a critical point which has been overlooked consistently

in the evaluations of Julian's thought, perhaps because it has gone unheeded in our theological heritage as a whole; but it will be seen to be Julian's central theme: She is taught not to flee the world (as she had been hoping, in the prospect of death), but to love the Lord while she is in the world, and by loving him, to love all things and all people as he loves them.

Notes on Julian's Vocabulary

Whether we read the Revelations in a translation into modern English, or study it in the Middle English versions of the manuscripts, the language which Julian uses creates several difficulties for the modern reader. First, although she explains her "shewings" in relatively simple language, her ideas--or perhaps the visions themselves-- are often far more complex or significant than they may appear to be, at least at first sight. This demands a close reading of the Revelations even where it appears to be relatively simple. Second, Julian's words invite a tendency by the modern reader to "import" ideas into her thought, especially where she uses terms already familiar to us from other theologians, but which are used by them in another sense. Additionally, there is always the obvious problem of words which have changed their meaning through the centuries, even though they may still be in use today.

There are numerous examples of words in the Revelations which lend themselves to misinterpretation. Some of these are deceptively ordinary:

1) Charity

Julian's use of the word "Charity" demands special attention. Although it is a reasonably common word today, our word has little in common with the theologically-rich "charitie" of Julian's time. In the Middle Ages, the concept of charity belonged to the Church. Charity, in ordinary life, was the highest possible virtue--reflecting the caritas (or love, grace) of God, as

it is given to human beings. In a sense, several readings of the Revelations are required before we can begin to acquire a feeling for what Julian means by "charity"; but in any case, we cannot reverse the process by trying to translate Julian's words, or her thoughts, directly into modern ones. "Charity", as Julian uses it, is more or less equivalent to "love"; but the word "love" has been used so loosely, and so frequently, in our time that it is vulgarized almost beyond repair. We may hope that Julian's Revelations can restore it for us, as we understand what she means by it; but we cannot hope to understand Julian by replacing her "charity" with our "love", in any ordinary sense.

2) Courtesy and homeliness

Like "charity", many of Julian's words retain only a hint of their original meanings. We noted that the Revelations reflects the culture of Norfolk peasant life in the fourteenth century, as well as the ornaments of medieval English chivalry. Hence, Julian speaks of "courtesy" in explaining the self-revelation of God to man; the "meekness" or "homeliness" of the saviour; the "dread" with which we should approach the Lord (and the wrong kinds of dread in the Christian relationship to God); and so on. The image of a peasant who has met the Lord of the manor is a favorite of Julian's. We should imagine a simple worker coming face-to-face, suddenly, with the knight or lord--who then speaks to the peasant amicably, as a close friend:

This shewing was vivid and life-like, hideous and dreadful, sweet and lovely. But of all the sights that I saw, this was the greatest comfort to me: that our good Lord who is so reverend and dreadful is also so homely and so courteous. And this most filled me full of liking, and sureness of soul.

For the understanding of this, he shewed me this simple example. The greatest worship that a mighty being or a great Lord can do to a poor servant, if he wills to be homely with him, is to shew himself, as he

truly is, both in private and publicly, with a glad countenance. Then thinketh the poor creature thus: "Lo! What more could this noble lord do, that is more worship and joy to me, than to shew this marvelous homeliness to me who am so little? In truth, this is greater joy and liking to me than if he gave me great gifts and remained himself a stranger to me." (ch. 7, p. 58)

In reading Julian, therefore, we need to bear in mind continually the images which underlie her thought--in this case, an extraordinary image of intimate (homely) communion between a peasant with a lord, in courtesy (in its chivalric sense), humility, and kindness.

3) Kindness

Kindness, by itself, is a concept which can be confusing to the modern reader when it is encountered in the Revelations. The Anglo-Saxon kind refers to nature, and more particularly, to human nature. We still speak of "human kind", and the word is related to the German Kind, meaning child or offspring. In a familial sense, therefore, one originally said "of that kind"--meaning of a certain family, or class or group. In Julian's usage, "kinds" can also indicate the various "families" of nature, i.e., of animal life. There is a further meaning in Julian, however, which is significant for her theology. We shall see that to be properly "kind" (i.e., to be human or natural) really means to be "kind" in the modern adjectival sense as well: that is, to be courteous or loving. A "real" human being, for Julian, is true to his nature: he is "kindly". Or, to reverse the image, we might say that a mother who is unkind to her children is an unnatural mother. Julian is able to use the word in all its shades of meaning within a single paragraph:

For his precious love never suffereth us to lose time; and all this is of the kind of goodness of God; by the working of grace. God is kind in his being. That is to say: the Goodness which is Kind, is God. He is the Ground: he is the Substance: he is the very thing

called Kindness. And he is the very Father and the very Mother of kinds. And all kinds that he hath made to flow out of him to work his will, they must be restored and brought again into him, by the salvation of man, through the working of grace. For of all the kinds that he hath set in various creatures separately, only in man is all the whole...(ch. 62, p. 168)

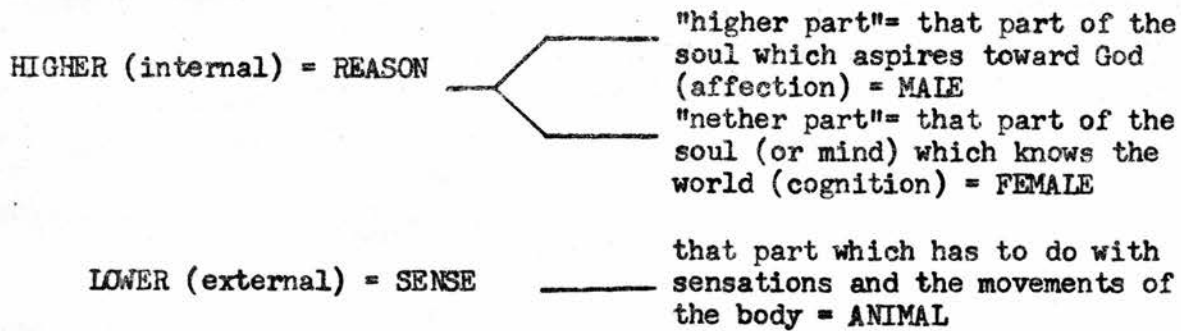
4) Beholding

"Beholding", for Julian, is not the same as "seeing". The difference is more than one of degree, as for example between "gazing" and "looking". In the Revelations (ch. 44 and elsewhere) the term "beholding" is used in a technical sense to describe Julian's concept of contemplative prayer. Specifically, it is used to refer to our looking upon Christ in prayer, and his looking upon us in love. It implies meditating, wondering, looking on in awe and in joy. An entire section (Part IV, ch. One, below) has therefore been given over to the meaning of this word and to Julian's concept of contemplative prayer which it describes.

5) Substance and Sensuality

For us, the word "substance" has to do with a material (what something is made of), or else the essence of a thing, or a summary of its content. In the mystical literature of Julian's day, however, the terms "substance" and "sensuality" have technical meanings with regard to the nature of the human soul. Julian, furthermore, uses the words in her own way, as distinct from the sense in which they appear in other mystics. We may begin with the meaning of "sense" or "sensuality" as they are understood by Julian's contemporaries. In Book II of the Scale, Walter Hilton describes the nature of the soul, which he takes to have two principal parts--a higher and a lower part (sometimes referred to as "inner" and "outer"). The higher part, furthermore, is also subdivided into

two. The parts of the soul are:⁹



In this scheme, cognition is supposed to be subject to affection. Different scholars, however, suggest different interpretations of the "higher part" which aspires towards God. Hilton, for example, argues that Reason aspires towards God and comes from God. For Thomas or the Cloud of Unknowing, on the other hand, Reason is unable to penetrate the nature of God, and belongs to knowledge of the world (cognition). Instead, Love is the "higher part". For Duns Scotus, Love is replaced by Will. In all these interpretations, however, it is understood that knowledge of the world, and the awareness of the bodily senses, are to be subject to one's knowledge and love for God. "Sense" or "sensuality", therefore, always have to do with the body, and mark the distinction between

9. Cf. Hilton's Scale, Book II, ch. 13 (Underhill, op. cit., p. 272):

"For thou shalt understand that a soul hath two parts. The one is called the sensuality; that is the fleshly feeling by the outward wits, the which is common to man and to beast. Of the which sensuality, when it is unreasonably and inordinately ruled, is made the image of sin...For then is the sensuality sin, when it is not ruled after reason. The other part is called reason, and that is departed in two: in the over part, and in the nether part..." etc.

The passage is quoted by Walsh, p. 28, where Walsh assumes that Julian accepts Hilton's concepts, but simplifies them by combining the lower element of reason with sensuality. See below, pp. 209 ff.

flesh and spirit, that which is bound to earth (the "passions") and that which aspires towards God. What we are inside--essentially--is the soul, or what Hilton identifies with Reason. This "higher self" is also referred to, occasionally, as the "substance" of the self, the "substantial soul" or essential being.¹⁰

While "substance" for Julian also indicates the higher part of our existence, she does not identify it specifically with Reason (or any other faculty), and she does not make a radical division between body and soul, or sense and substance. In a general way, she understands "substance" to be the being of something in God's eyes--the thing that it is, in its nature (that is, as God intends it), regardless of how it may appear. Thus she is able to say:

God demyth vs vpon oure kyndely substance whych is evyr kepte one
in hyme hole and safe without ende. and this dome is of his ryght
fulhede And man demyth upon chaungeable Sensualyte. whych semyth
now oone and now a nother. (AMR; cf. ch. 45, p. 122)

In this paragraph it is clear that "substance" implies the opposite of "sensuality", insofar as the latter has to do with appearances only. The translation "essence" for "substance" (Wolters) conveys part of the idea; but "essence" today can also mean something immaterial--a fragrance, or a hidden idea, hence the soul alone (as distinct from the body). For Julian, however, "substance" is not immaterial or ideal, but is the truth of our being, body and soul: the way we are meant to be, as whole persons. It is our most material part, if we could say such a thing. Using her terms more broadly, therefore, Julian is able to speak even of the "sensual soul" (ch. 57, p. 157)--implying not that

10 The scholastics disagree whether the soul has a material or quasi-material composition (substance), and whether the angels, etc. have "bodies" in the sense of substance. This argument, however, is not a concern for Julian in the Revelations.

part of our soul which is non-Reason, but our whole selves in creation, the human existence which becomes God's in the Incarnation.

It will be clear from these examples that the problem of understanding Julian's vocabulary is a theological one, as well as a linguistic one. A major part of understanding her theology is to allow her to define her own terms. Some terms which cannot be understood in an ordinary sense, but as Julian defines them, are: "soul", "sensual" (and the combination, "sensual soul"), "substance" (and "substantial soul"), "wrath", "beholding", "prayer", and "faith". Much of the following study will be given to the way in which Julian uses these terms to convey her own characteristic theology.

A Synopsis of the Revelations

Before entering into Julian's three categories of divine Love in any depth, in the theology of Love "uncreated", "created", and "given", it will be helpful to summarize briefly the Revelations chapter-by-chapter. Obviously it will not be possible to reduce the whole book to a few statements, especially since Julian does not present us with a systematic argument. However, by putting the content of the book into our own words it is possible to see how Julian's thought progressed through the book, and even through the visions themselves. In so doing, we should note three important points about the relationships of the chapters to one another.

First, we must assume that Julian did not organize her own book into chapters, since she never mentions them, but saw her work as divided into "shewings". Presumably the chapter divisions came later, perhaps from the scribe who also composed the chapter headings. Since this is the case, Julian's sixteen "shewings" are not evenly distributed among the chapters. Some are quite short, occupying only one or two pages; others, like the First,

Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Sixteenth, are quite long, and occupy the major part of the book. The reasons for the chapter divisions are not always clear, since the content of the chapters is not neatly divided, and the visions themselves carry over from one chapter to another.

Second, the "shewings" themselves repeat one another in their immediate subject-matter (i.e., the face of Jesus, the Virgin Mary, etc.) as well as in thematic content (i.e., the nature of prayer, the love of God for creation, the nature of the Incarnation, etc.). Julian must have regarded each "shewing" as making a slightly different point, so that she was able to distinguish between them; and perhaps the sixteen "shewings" were originally separated by lapses in time.¹¹ In any case, they cannot be neatly divided as we have them today in the Revelations, even in terms of what they teach. Thus the three themes of Charity "uncreated", "created" and "given" do not unfold precisely in that order; rather, they must be discerned through the whole book, though some "shewings" are concerned more with one of the themes than with the others. In the same way, a practical subject like contemplative prayer may be treated at length in certain sections of the book (e.g., ch. 41-43), but on the other hand it will not be confined to those sections.

Third, the simplest organization of the book into its sixteen "shewings" does not mean that Julian had only sixteen supernatural experiences during the full day and night of her visions. Many of the Revelations contain more than one supernatural vision or locution. In the First Revelation alone, for example, Julian saw the bleeding head of Christ (of which she never ceased to

11 Cf. Ch. 8, of the Revelations (p. 60) "Then the bodily sight stinted..." etc., indicating a space between the "shewings".

be aware); was aware of the presence of the whole Trinity; saw the Virgin at the time of the annunciation ("ghostly, in bodily likeness", ch. 4, p. 52); saw the whole universe symbolized by a vision of a little ball, like a hazelnut, in her hand; discerned the "homely loving" of God (ch. 5); and was taught concerning the nature of prayer by "means" (ch. 6). All this, she says, came in a variety of ways:

The whole sight was shewed in three parts: by bodily sight, by words formed in my understanding, and by ghostly sight. But the ghostly sight I cannot or may not shew it as clearly and as fully as I would. Yet I trust in our Lord God almighty that he will, of his goodness and for your love, make you receive it more ghostly and more sweetly than I can or may tell it. (ch. 9, p. 62).

In what follows, only the main ideas which came to Julian in her "shewings" are indicated, apart from their deeper theological significance. The chapters have been grouped arbitrarily, for convenience, broadly indicating thematic breaks in the narrative. The chapters and Revelations are related to one another as follows:

Introduction.....	Ch. 1-3	Ninth Revelation.....	Ch. 22-23
First Revelation....	Ch. 4-9	Tenth "	.....Ch. 24
Second "	..... Ch. 10	Eleventh "	.....Ch. 25
Third "	..... Ch. 11	Twelfth "	.....Ch. 26
Fourth "	..... Ch. 12	Thirteenth"	.....Ch. 27-40
Fifth "	..... Ch. 13	Fourteenth"	.....Ch. 41-63
Sixth "	..... Ch. 14	Fifteenth "	.....Ch. 64-65
Seventh "	..... Ch. 15	Autobiographical	
Eighth "	..... Ch. 16-21	remarks	.....Ch. 66
		Sixteenth "	.....Ch. 67-85
		Conclusion	.....Ch. 86

* * *

Ch. 4. (First of all is a vision of the head of Christ, as he is crowned with thorns and his head begins to bleed. Julian realizes that this man is God--not only this, but that it is the same person, both God and man, who is giving Julian her vision at that moment without any intermediary. That she

is sure her Revelation is genuine--not a demonic illusion--and that it is given to her directly by God is significant, at least for a medieval, and affects Julian deeply. She is being touched directly by the Trinity. She is filled with heartfelt joy and knows that it is the Trinity who made her glad.)

The Trinity is to be understood whenever we see Jesus, because Jesus is God; and God, the Trinity. And God makes known to us that he is our Maker, our Keeper, and our everlasting Lover. The full meaning of these words needs to be developed; but we learn from the vision itself that God, the Trinity, far from being inaccessible to simple people, makes himself known to us in two ways: through the teaching of the Church; and sometimes in special ways, such as Julian's vision. Thus God wills for us to know him. (Julian then sees Mary, at the moment of the annunciation, as scarcely more than a child). God stoops even to the childlike simplicity of Mary, not only revealing himself to her but choosing her to be his mother. This is the marvel of the incarnation, both that God comes down to us (as to the young Mary) and that he becomes truly human, so that we might know him. The beauty of Mary's soul is that she recognized her own littleness next to God, and responded to him with reverence and humility.

Ch. 5. God is "maker, keeper, lover." All things exist because of the warm personal love of God (which Julian calls "homely"). Next to God, all creation is like a hazelnut in his hand--tiny and insignificant. Nevertheless, God loves it continually; and it is his love which keeps it, for without his continuous love it would vanish. True joy, then, would be an awareness of God's intimate love--not only a conscious unity to God, but a real unity in which nothing comes between us. Nothing short of this could ever fulfill us as human beings. Because God wants us to know him in this way, he gives us

a yearning for him, which is the Holy Spirit at work in us. (In all Julian's discussion, as she tells us, we assume that the "we" referred to is limited to those who love Christ, unless Julian points out otherwise.)

Ch. 6. If this is so, then it is better for us to pray directly to God, rather than by any "means" (e.g., by the merit of a saint or a relic); for these things do not have any merit (or power) on their own. Only God's love is responsible for all things, and prayer is answered by his own goodness without the need for any intermediary. There is nothing too lowly or insignificant to be loved by God--not even our bodily functions. When we begin to understand the full extent of God's love we are both humbled by our knowledge, and made full of joy.

Ch. 7-10. Thus God is "meek" and "homely," not distant or fiercesome. This is something we can never appreciate, except by the Holy Spirit informing us inwardly. Our faith already tells us that God loves us (i.e., this is the teaching of the Church), but it is only by God's grace that we experience this love inwardly, seeing God as he truly is towards us. Even Mary's grace--her humility--comes from God, and is not of her own merit. God reveals this "personal" love to whomever he wishes, when he reveals himself, as to Mary. When we review all these things--that God loves everything, that he loves us beyond knowing, and wants us to experience his love so that we can love too--we cannot help turning to one another in his love. ("Knowledge" here is understood more in an experiential way than in a purely intellectual way.) We are, first of all, united to all other Christians in faith, which comes from the unique revelation to us by the Holy Spirit that God loves us unconditionally, in Jesus. We are loved by Jesus, and we love him. Because this is so, we are bound to all men and to all things, sharing God's love for them. We

are not related in love through a demand (i.e., that we ought to love one another), but we are related in our inmost being to all things, because in Christ we are in union with the creator of all things.

Ch. 10. Now that we understand something of the Love of the Trinity, we can understand better what God's will is for us: that we should know him as he really is. But we realize that we can never fully see God as he is in himself. God reveals himself to us as he wills, and at these times we want to see even more of him, to see him as we will in heaven. In the meantime we should trust him without seeing him, trusting in his love for us. God has, however, showed us himself in human form, suffering the pain of sin himself. He did this in order to restore us to the humanity which is rightfully ours, the humanity which is his own. It is common enough for Christians to recognize that we should be like Jesus, but God wishes for us to desire him in a more positive way: to seek him earnestly, to wait patiently for his love, and to depend entirely on him for everything. God the Holy Spirit gives us the grace to do this; and then he rewards us with the gift of faith, when we "find" him--or perhaps with special visions of himself, like Julian's.

Ch. 11-14. What does it mean to trust God completely? Faith is understanding that God does all things, and therefore that all things--no matter how they appear to us--are done well. We think of some things as being good and others as being evil. But it would be impossible for God to condemn the very things that happen by his will, and God is ultimately responsible for everything that is done in the world. God is even responsible for whatever we do. We have said that God loves all things, and we know that God's nature does not change; therefore God has always loved all things, and whatever happens in the world

serves the purpose of God's unchanging love. For this reason we can say that, in an abiding sense, there is no wrath in God.

What, then, is evil? Does God bring it about? What are its consequences? (Julian receives no answer to her first question, at this point.) We can be certain that God does not sin. Furthermore, we are reassured that because of the cross, evil is absolutely overcome and has no power over us. We can--and should--laugh at evil. Everything that God allows to take place, including what is accomplished by the "unmight" of Satan, eventually turns to our joy. This is something which we may not be able to see, but we trust that it is so, because we trust God. And although there is no wrath in God, we can be sure at the same time that he does not tolerate sin in his presence, and therefore in our lives. His purpose is for us to be cleansed, so that we might dwell in him and participate, so to speak, in his joyful heavenly banquet. We can, in fact, experience the greatest bliss of heaven if we turn to God even in the least. All men will be rewarded according to their deeds; yet (in the paradox of God's love) even the slightest service in God's love merits his highest gratitude.

Ch. 15. Sometimes we suffer, which is the consequence of sin. Yet this is another way of saying that sometimes God "withdraws" from us just enough for us to experience his absence--to long for him. At these moments we should recognize that he is still caring for us, because he keeps us continually and loves us at every moment. Suffering is not punishment for our sins, but reminds us of our need for God. But if we are not punished in life for our own behaviour, neither do we, on the other hand, earn the affection which God gives us. He rewards us for his own good deeds in us, and gives freely according to his own will. Sometimes he leaves us to ourselves, in his wisdom; but we need

not (and in fact cannot logically) blame ourselves when we suffer hardship, but trust in God's steadfast love for us.

Ch. 16-26. In the suffering which Jesus experienced on the cross, we can see what it is to look upon, and live among, men who are not in communion with the Father. His suffering is not merely physical, but mental. The compassion which God feels for us in our state of sin is heightened in the experience of the cross, where men not only are ignorant of the presence of God, but put him to death. The sorrow which Mary felt for Jesus in his suffering is shared by the Christian; but even more, the compassion which Jesus felt, and feels, for us becomes our own compassion for all mankind. We see the world not only in light of the cross, but as though from the cross. There is no way to apprehend God except in this experience of union with the crucified Christ; he is our only revelation of God, and in him--on the cross--we find heaven. We should understand that the purpose of God's love is perfectly served in his own suffering, which will result in our own joy. Sin itself, which causes such pain to God, is necessary in the working out of our absolute union to God. Although we cannot understand this, we can understand that "all shall be well," because all things are brought about by God's love.

Ch. 27-28. There is always a temptation to blame God for our sin, and the misery which comes with it. Otherwise, we would have to conclude that God is not in fact responsible for all things. But the truth is neither of these. First of all, sin is not something which God does--in fact, it is not anything that is done. (In modern language, we would say that "sin" describes a relationship, rather than an activity.) We may think of sin as just the opposite of what God does; it is a "non-deed". The pain which results from sin, however, is very real to us: it can be seen, even if sin cannot be seen. Yet

this pain has a positively good effect, that of warning us of our sinful relationship to God (just as pain warns of disease in the body). It convinces us how undesirable it is not to have perfect union with God. Furthermore, God does not blame us for sin, but looks upon us with compassion, and our sin actually brings him pain. Realizing this, we do not need to judge anyone, and far less ought we to complain against God on account of our situation. Instead, we ought to see others with compassion, just as God sees us.

Ch. 29-34. We now recognize two kinds of truth, both of which inhere in God. One is the truth of salvation, which is shown to us in Jesus's suffering on the cross. The other is that which does not have to do with our own salvation. The latter is God's "secret;" it is not shown to us because we are creatures, and could not understand. Furthermore, we still exist in a state of sin and suffering, in which we are still moving toward a fully-developed life in the Spirit. When we are at last able to dwell in the full presence of God, we will understand such mysteries as the relationship of the heathen to God, and the nature of the Trinity. In this respect we can say that the body of Christ-- we, who are the Church-- is not yet fully glorified or impassible, though it will be. In the meantime we must simply trust in what God has revealed to us already. This means that we do not eliminate any of the scriptures, and out of submission to the Church we do not omit any of its teachings--even those which we cannot understand, in particular the accounts of eternal damnation of the wicked--whether they be those who have never heard of Christ, or those who are baptized but live reprobate lives. The apparent injustice of damnation has to be understood in the light of God's all-embracing love for every creature, and the recognition that God finds nothing impossible. We need to

surrender the apparent contradiction of love and judgment to the wisdom of God, trusting God to "make all things well" in a way which cannot be known to us in our present life.

Ch. 35-36. We have seen that God does all things, and does them well; and that God views our suffering with infinite compassion, suffering much more grievously than we do. This being so, we can weigh whatever happens to us in the light of what we know about the will of the Trinity for us, which is his love. We need not become either too exuberant, or too sad, about anything that happens in the world. Instead, we understand it in light of the crucifixion and the love of God (i.e., that everything, whether "bad" or "good," is working toward our reconciliation to God). This does not mean that we cease to have emotions or to be happy--far from it, we experience more and more joy because we see that we are not subject to the world. Our emotions spring from the Holy Spirit (experiencing divine love, contrition and compassion), and are not manipulated by the events that occur around us.

Ch. 37-46. Can the Christian therefore expect to be perfected in this life--so that he no longer experiences the pain of sin? We might like to think so, but in fact God shows us that we will sin until we are taken from this life. It is the condition into which we are born (it is what we commonly think of as "human nature," though as Julian has shown, what we think of as "natural" to us is not our essential nature, but a kind of diseased nature which does not belong to us in creation). Despite our lapses, however, no Christian ever needs to think of himself as lost. Every soul which is to be saved has been "saved" in God from the beginning. From God's point of view, every soul which is to be saved is judged in the light of what that soul will be--that is,

God sees each of us as living in him already.

(The unfolding of this point extends over several chapters:) If God turns all things to good, even sin, then it is clear that we are never out of God's will. God wants for us to know this. At the same time, he wills for us to hate sin absolutely--rather than, for example, feeling that we may as well sin all the more in order to be forgiven all the more. We see that God is the source of our prayers, in this situation, because he wills for us to pray in accordance with what he is already working out in our lives. In this sense our whole life, rather than certain moments of it, constitutes a continuous prayer to God, and springs from his will. We may not understand this, and in recognizing the goodness of God we tend to judge ourselves according to how we appear in this world--in contrast to God's goodness. But God judges us according to what we are intended to be, which is to say the human nature which we see in Jesus. In this life it is impossible for us to be aware of our true nature--our true self--apart from recognizing it in Christ. We become aware of ourselves in faith. And in faith we understand that just as Christ became in every way like ourselves (but always in communion with the Father), we shall become like him. Because there is no time, for God, God sees us as already dwelling within him, and Jesus living within us. We are already in substantial union with him, and have always been from the beginning of creation.

This is to re-emphasize that God is not angry with us, but loves us and wills for us to know his love. Although we are used to speaking of "forgiveness," forgiveness is only a temporal phenomenon. Strictly speaking, there is neither wrath nor forgiveness from God's point of view, because nothing has ever really changed in God's love toward us. By contrast, wrath is

something which belongs to the realm of evil, something that we see (Julian uses the word "sensual") in this life but which does not apply to God. Anger, as we know it, is due to our changeable nature (as opposed to God's consistent Love) and to inadequacies on our part--either of our ability, or of wisdom, or just plain goodness. None of these kinds of inadequacy applies to God, and God's love supplies the inadequacies which we feel in ourselves. Salvation, in fact, is the direct consequence of God's love as we trust in it and experience it. God's love keeps us, allows us to live, and gives us new life. This is the love which overcomes wrath and heals our pain.

Ch. 50-52. If God does not blame us for our sin, then either sin must be an illusion, or else God views sin in some way differently than we do. Why do we go on sinning? (Julian is raising her old questions about sin in new form, and this time is answered "full mistily" by the vision of a servant in his relationship to the Lord. A key element in this vision, which we must grasp in order to understand it, is that Julian is being shown the nature of sin from God's point of view. Therefore questions such as the culpability of Adam in his "fall" are dealt with only in view of the salvation which has already taken place, in Christ).

(The vision: Julian sees a great Lord, clothed in the sky and seated on a throne. It is situated in the middle of a desert; and before the throne stands a servant, in ragged attire. The servant turns to run an errand for the Lord, but in so doing falls into a chasm, from which he cannot rise. The Lord lifts him out of the chasm and immediately, the peasant is transfigured: he is clothed in a shining robe, and stands at the right hand of the Lord. Julian takes the vision to be an allegory, in which man's fall in sin before

God is depicted by the peasant's fall into the ditch. At the same time, the servant represents the incarnate Christ.)

The view affirms once more that sin (the chasm) is not illusory, but on the other hand that God works in all things to our good. When we sin, Christ is present to heal us in that sin. The servant is lifted out of the ditch, and glorified. Once more, we consider how God looks upon his creatures: There is no time from his point of view (God having created time for our sakes), and therefore the whole question of temporal "fall" and forgiveness is limited to an earthly point of view. For God, our salvation occurs at the same "time" as our own creation. "When Adam fell, God's son fell" (into the womb of Mary). There is, therefore, no "time" in which we are unredeemed, although in our own experience the process of redemption and sanctification seems to be a slow one. Christ lives in our souls already, and from God's point of view always has. (Julian has raised the question of Adam's responsibility for sin and has answered it by saying that Adam is guilty, and that he is worthy of blame from our own point of view--but not from God's--owing to God's grace. God can only look at Adam in terms of the humanity of his own Son. There is no "pre-salvation" history for God.)

Ch. 54-57. We ought to rejoice, therefore, at the union of man to God which is already established for us in Christ. God does not distinguish between the soul of Christ, and the "least soul among the saved". Christ dwells within us already. To understand this--which is faith--is nothing more than to grasp the true nature of our lives as Christians. To live the Christian life means to experience the working of Christ in us. Jesus is, as it were, presenting us to his Father in his own body, as a kind of pleasing gift to the Father--the gift of himself.

Ch. 58-62. Jesus is, then, much more than a "saviour" in any abstract or legal sense. He is really present to us, as a loving Father, Mother, and intimate Lover. His love is far greater, too, than any mother's love. Even the best mother bears her child to a life of pain which ends in death; but Jesus does not allow his children to die. We ought to behave towards God, therefore, as true children--running to him, rather than away from him, whenever we are afraid or are ashamed of ourselves. In practice this means turning to the Church, the body of love. We know that as individuals we often experience "brokenness" and pain; but as a body, the Church will never be allowed to be broken apart. Its purpose is to surround us with the love of Jesus.

Ch. 63-72. Once we understand that we are absolutely loved by God, in spite of our sin, we can begin to appreciate sin for what it really is--that is, to hate it for what it does to human nature. Nature is good in itself; by "human nature" we understand the life of Jesus, which is the life of true sonship created for the Son and given to us. Sin is a perversion of nature. The grace of God is precisely that he has preserved nature from any permanent wound from sin. Nature has been "tried in the fire of tribulation" (sin) and not found wanting. This is because nature itself springs from God's grace. If we think about this, we will hate sin worse than hell, because it perverts what is meant to glorify God (i.e., we will hate sin for its own sake, rather than out of fear of punishment). Nevertheless we are not afraid of sin, because our whole life exists in God, and is a process of healing and fulfillment in Christ.

Ch. 74-77. There are certain kinds of dread, however, which can be helpful in this restoration process. Naked fear "purges" us. (Julian may be thinking of the cathartic effect which tragedy can have on people emotionally, as

well as the theological idea that sin exists ultimately to bring us closer to God. She may also have in mind the concept of "purgation" as the first step towards "illumination" and finally "union" to God, though she does not explicitly refer to such stages in the Christian life.). Dread makes us realize our need for God. Dread of pain (or "punishment") can be good for us too, when it awakens us to the fact that we are in fact sinful. Sometimes in this respect it is even good for us to come near to death (as Julian has done). It is also good for us, at times, to reach the point of despair, so that we actually long for God; for this turns us to God. Finally, there is a "reverent" dread in which we properly respect God, just as we would respect our own father, or a mighty king. This kind of dread goes hand-in-hand with love, and in fact springs from love. One does not exist without the other. (Julian's observation throws the common phrase "God-fearing" into new light. Love precedes proper reverence; but fear of God never results in love.) Any other kind of dread, such as being afraid of the wrath of God, is neither helpful, nor of God. It is false, just as it would be false to claim that a child properly loves his parent by being in constant fear of him. We do this when we feel that our sin is too great for there to be any salvation for us, or when we turn away from God out of fear, instead of to him in faith. Anyone who thinks that he needs to do more penance in order to be loved by God ought to think of his whole life as a kind of acceptable penance before God. The suffering which is produced by sin is its own penance. It is no use, in fact, to dwell on our own sinfulness (in the sense of being terrified by it) because we can never fully appreciate the evil nature of sin (i.e., how displeasing it really is to God).

Ch. 78-86. It is therefore reassuring to know that we will sin--as all men will--but that sin is only a part of our life, the end of which is perfect sinlessness or complete life, in the presence of God. Salvation is constantly at work in us already. We ought to look continually to Jesus, who is the source of our life, and not look so much at ourselves. Self-examination causes us to fall (e.g., by convincing us that God does not really love us). When we look to Jesus, we see that God looks upon us as a genuine Father--rejoicing just to look at us, knowing that one day we shall rejoice in him.

All these things have been shown to us so that we will be able to love, and to live, freely. Instead of telling God, "Things ought to have been this way"--which is how we often feel like praying--we are free to say "Lord, bless you!" This is why we are given the gift of reason, our highest faculty--so that we would use it to know God, who is the source of it. This is why we have been given the Church, which is the fellowship of his love. This is why we have been given the Holy Spirit, who teaches us inwardly of the love of God, and who prays within us and gives us his "sundry gifts." The greatest gift that we can offer in return, and the only way that we can truly please God, is to understand his love for us and to rejoice in that love.

II

UNCREATED CHARITY: LOVE WITHIN GOD

(THE THEOLOGY OF THE TRINITY)

Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, even as You Three are one God, even as You are one Power, one Wisdom, and one Love, and yet in Holy Scripture power is especially attributed to Thee, Beloved Father, wisdom to Thee, Blessed Son, love to Thee, O Holy Spirit; give me, O one Almighty God, threefold in three Persons, these same three things, power to serve Thee, wisdom to please Thee, love and will to bring these into action, strength that I may act, wisdom that I may know how to act, love that I may desire to perform always what is most pleasing to Thee. Even as Thou art full of every good, and there is no good that is absent where these three are present, strength, wisdom, and love joined together; grant these to me, O Holy Trinity, in Thine own honour.

—prayer prescribed for anchoresses
in the Ancrene Riwe, Part I

UNCREATED CHARITY: LOVE WITHIN GOD

The Trinity in the Revelations

The Revelations of Divine Love is, above all, a theology of the Love of God. It begins, therefore, in Julian's understanding of the Love which is within God, and which is identical with God: the Love of the Trinity, the Being of God. Although a theology of the Trinity is never explicitly developed in the Revelations, it is possible to see this theme underlying the content of every chapter, and it is evident even in the prose style of the Revelations itself.

The "trinitarian style" of the Revelations has attracted the attention of critics in recent years because it is reminiscent of certain other mystical writers. Julian tends to classify things into groups of three, for example, much like Pseudo-Dionysius in the Divine Names, or like her Flemish contemporary, Jan van Ruysbroeck.¹ Whether this reflects a direct influence from Dionysian theology or not, it must be more than a matter of stylistic preference or a "fondness for numbers".² Rather, it demonstrates Julian's awareness of the Trinity as the central and most important element of her visions. This is indicated in the first sentence of her book, which, as we have seen, refers to the Trinity:

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- 1 See, for example, Ruysbroeck's The Sparkling Stone, the first three chapters of which are entitled "Through Three Things a Man Becomes Good", "Through Three Things a Man Becomes Inward", "Through Three Things a Man Becomes God-seeing" (Late Medieval Mysticism, op. cit., pp. 292-320).
 - 2 The phrase is used by Reynolds in "Some Literary Influences", op. cit., p. 7. Sr. Reynolds is right to note this similarity in style, and does not, of course, limit Julian's similarity to Pseudo-Dionysius to the level of literary style.

The first [shewing] is of his precious crowning of thorns; and therein was contained and made manifest the Blessed Trinity with the Incarnation and the unity between God and man's soul...(ch. 1, p. 45)

Describing her first vision in more detail, she explains that while she did not directly "see" the Being of God in this Revelation (or in any of the others), she was continually aware of the Trinity in every vision of Jesus:

In the same shewing, suddenly the Trinity filled full my heart with the utmost joy (thus I understood it shall be in heaven without end unto all that come thither). For the Trinity is God and God is the Trinity. The Trinity is our Maker. The Trinity is our Keeper. The Trinity is our everlasting Lover. The Trinity is our endless Joy and our Bliss, by our Lord Jesus Christ and in our Lord Jesus Christ. And this was shewed in the first sight and in them all. For where Jesus appeareth, the Blessed Trinity is understood, as I see it. (ch. 4, p. 51).

Similarly, when Julian classifies things into groups of three it is because she sees an analogy for the Trinity in the things which she describes. That God is Three-in-One is the first mystery to present itself in the Revelations, and is the underlying assumption of every "shewing" which follows.

While there is no section of the Revelations which is devoted specifically to a theology of the Trinity (and it could be argued that the Trinity is never the object of Julian's thought, because it is a basic assumption) it is nevertheless important to see how the Revelations develops in light of it. Obviously Julian's faith was trinitarian at the time of her visions, in which the Trinity was "made manifest" to her. What is significant to the Revelations, and what appears to have changed for Julian during the experience of her "shewings", is her understanding of the Trinity: of the Persons in their relationship to one another, and of the relationship of the Trinity to the world and the human soul. Although she did not, and probably could not, articulate her understanding of the Trinity in the way of the great

scholastics, she indicates throughout the Revelations how she thought of the divine Love which she calls "charity unmade", the uncreated Love which is God.

First, the language of the Revelations demonstrates Julian's awareness of the Trinity in prayer. As an anchoress, she was constantly reminded of the Trinity during the daily Offices. The Ancrene Riwle suggests, for example, that a prayer to the Trinity be said along with the Pater Noster, thereby making it a major part of the anchoress' daily devotions.³ The Revelations incorporates the language of these prayers, and of the Riwle as a whole, by referring to God the Father as divine Power, God the Son as divine Wisdom, and the Holy Spirit as divine Love. The tradition of viewing the Trinity in terms of Power, Wisdom and Love is ancient: if it does not appear in quite that form in the scriptures (as the author of the Riwle asserts), it may be traced to Augustine, elaborated somewhat in De Trinitate.⁴ Julian simply assumes it:

For ere that [God] made us, he loved us...This is a love made of the divine substantial love of the Holy Ghost, mighty by reason of the Power of the Father, wise in the consciousness of the Wisdom of the Son. (ch. 53, p. 148).

Sometimes she substitutes "Truth" for "Power" in her description of the Trinity:

Truth seeth God, and Wisdom beholdeth God; and of these two cometh the third; that is, a holy marvellous delight in God, which is love. Where truth and wisdom is verily there is love, which cometh of them both--and all of God's making. For God is endless sovereign Truth, endless sovereign Wisdom, endless sovereign Love, unmade...(ch. 44, p. 121).

But the Might of God is his Truth, in which the Son (Wisdom) participates, by

3 Riwle, Part I (op. cit., p. 10).

4 Cf. On the Trinity, Books VI and VII (Dods, Marcus, ed., The Works of Aurelius Augustine, Vol. VII, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1873, pp. 165 ff.).

the Holy Spirit (divine Love):

Thus in our true Mother Jesus our life is grounded, in the foreseeing wisdom of himself from without--beginning, with the high might of the Father and the sovereign goodness of the Holy Ghost. (ch. 63, p. 170).

While Julian borrows the terminology of the Riwle for her Revelations, however, she suggests a theology of the Trinity which grows out of her own visions and which has its own emphases. This is evident in all her references to the Trinity, even where it is not her immediate concern, and even if she thought of herself as recapitulating the theology of the Riwle completely, as she knew it in her prayers. Three areas of thought which are especially important are: 1) her understanding of divine Love, which she treats as the Being of the Trinity itself--the objective relationship between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; 2) the relationship which the Trinity has to creation, that is, to space and time; and 3) the nature of revelation, in which man comes to know the Trinity in Jesus Christ.

Perichoresis Within the Trinity: the "Homely" Love of God

Earlier we noted Julian's reference to the "divine substantial love of the Holy Ghost". Here Julian does not mean, of course, that there is a large quantity of love in God--though she would undoubtedly agree that God's love is infinite--but that the love of the Spirit is identical with his "substance", or Being. The Holy Spirit is divine Love: Charity is not merely a property or an attribute of his, not merely something which the Spirit has or does. The identity of the Spirit with divine Love, however, is not sufficient to describe the nature of divine Love as Julian understands it. In the Revelations, it becomes apparent that God, the Trinity, is divine Love: "Love" does not describe the Holy Spirit alone, any more than "Power" is meant to be confined to

the Father or "Wisdom" to the Son. Rather, Julian treats divine "Love" as the relationship within the Father, the Son and the Spirit, such that each Person may be found only in the other persons whom he "loves".

To see how Julian develops a concept of the love-relationship in the Trinity--a relationship which is identical with God's Being--it is necessary to look for a moment to her vision of the Incarnation. The two are related, because for Julian the Incarnation "manifests" the Trinity: that is, the relationship between the divinity and the humanity of Christ, in which the Godhead dwells bodily in Christ, manifests the in-dwelling relationship of the Persons of the Godhead in one another. Her key statement in this regard cannot be quoted too often, because it is of the greatest significance:

For where Jesus appeareth, the Blessed Trinity is understood, as I see it. (ch. 4, p. 51).

The divine Love which impresses Julian in this vision is more than the willingness of Christ to suffer and to die on the cross. It is evident in the presence of the whole Trinity in humanity, in the person of Christ. This is the Love which brings God to man, in complete humility: his self-revelation, such that Julian herself--an ordinary woman who is not even educated--is able to see the glory of God "without any intermediary". (ch. 4).

The presence of God to Julian in her visions, demonstrating his presence to humanity in the person of Christ, affects her profoundly:

And I said: "Lord, bless us! This I said with reverence for my meaning, in a mighty voice. For I was truly astounded by the wonder and the marvel, that he who is so reverend and dreadful should be so homely with a sinful creature still living in this wretched flesh. I took it that in this time our Lord Jesus, of his courteous love, wished to shew me comfort before the time of my temptation. (ch. 4, p. 51).

In the chapters which follow, she often refers to the "homely" love of God in which God is seen to be in intimate communion with humanity. Literally, "homely"

love means "making one's home with another"; and also conveys the privacy or intimacy of a family--not only in the love between husband and wife but between mother and child. In medieval usage, it carries the additional meaning of permanence, or a continuous, habitual relationship.⁵ To Julian, it conveys the profound miracle of the Incarnation, the absolute intimacy of God and man.

In traditional theology in the Church, Julian's idea is referred to as "divine indwelling". It is particularly identified with the gospel of John, as in ch. 14 and 17, in which Jesus says that the Father dwells in him, and he in the Father.⁶ Julian calls the passage to mind more than once, as she sees the Father present in the Son, the Son dwelling in the Father, and the Spirit in the Father and the Son. Neither the Father nor the Spirit are visible in Julian's Revelations; yet both are present, or "manifest", in the person of Christ. Thus she is able to say, describing a vision of three "heavens" (in the Ninth Revelation):

As for the first heaven, Christ shewed me his Father--not in bodily likeness, but in his Fatherhood and in his working: that is to say, I saw in Christ that the Father is. (ch. 22, p. 83).

Or again:

All the Trinity worked in the passion of Christ, ministering an abundance of power and plenty of grace to us by him. But only

5 Warrack, p. 206; Reynolds, " 'Courtesy' and 'Homeliness' in the Revelations", op. cit., p. 3. See also Thornton, op. cit., p. 215: "Homely" means habitual, and therefore constant, calm, and, in the Benedictine sense, stable. If Hilton counters anxiety about aridity by teaching that the lack of sensible fervour is our normal state, Julian goes further still. Feeling is "right nought" because emotional experience, in any context, is spasmodic, therefore it cannot be "homely".

6 See Walsh, James, "God's Homely Loving: St. John and Julian of Norwich on the Divine Indwelling", in The Month, March, 1958.

the Maiden's Son suffered. Whereof all the blessed Trinity rejoiceth. (ch. 23, p. 86).

To see the Father is therefore to look upon Jesus. Thus she writes, in describing the parable of the Lord and servant:

...man is blinded in this life; and therefore we may not see our Father, God, as he is. But what time he, of his goodness, will shew himself to man, he sheweth himself in homely fashion, as man. Notwithstanding that sight, I saw verily that we ought to know and believe that the Father is not man...(ch. 51, p. 137)

And the working of the Father is in the Son:

For truly it is the greatest joy that could be, as I see it, that he who is highest and mightiest, noblest and worthiest, is the lowest and meekest, homeliest and most courteous...For the perfect fullness of joy that we shall have, as I see it, is this marvellous courtesy and homeliness from our Father, who is our Maker in our Lord Jesus Christ--who is our Brother and our Saviour. (ch. 7, p. 58. Emphasis added).

In these passages, and others like them, Julian struggles to convey a difficult concept: that the Father and the Spirit are present in the Son, and are made known by him, although only the Son is incarnate. A divine interpenetration, or comingling, of Persons becomes apparent, such that Father, Son and Spirit are always present at every moment; yet only the incarnate Son, Jesus Christ, may be seen. Indeed, she concludes that it is impossible for a creature to look upon the Being of God at all. Yet in this "manifestation" of the Trinity in Christ, she has been able to see the relationship of the Persons of the Trinity to one another. It is an absolute presence in one another, a "homely loving" or intimate sharing of the Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Thus there are three Persons, but only one Being: a timeless loving, or participation, of Father, Son and Holy Spirit in one another, such that there are not three divine beings, but one Being; not three gods, but one God.

Although the concept of "divine indwelling" is never fully articulated by

Julian, it develops through her references to the Trinity. Julian is unable, for example, to separate the "workings" of the Father, Son and Spirit, even though she is able to refer to them as working in different ways. They are "Maker", "Keeper" and "Lover" (ch. 40); "Truth", "Wisdom" and "Love" (ch. 44); "Fatherhood", "Motherhood" and "Lordship" (ch. 58). The Father creates, the Son is Saviour, the Spirit moves to repentance (ch. 39); the Father makes us, the Son remakes us, and the Spirit perfects us (ch. 58); "Our Father willeth, our Mother (i.e., the Son) worketh, our good Lord the Holy Ghost confirmeth" (ch. 59); "the high might of the Trinity is our Father, and the deep wisdom of the Trinity is our Mother, and the great love of the Trinity is our Lord" (ch. 58); "God almighty is our kindly Father: and God all-wisdom is our kindly Mother: with the love and goodness of the Holy Ghost; which is all one God, one Lord" (ch. 58). It will be seen that Julian's emphasis is always double, first on the working of the Persons, who are not to be confused; and second, on the communion of the Persons, who together are one Being, and work as One:

Thus our good Lord answered all the questions and doubts that I could bring up, saying of full comfort: "I may make all things well: and I can make all things well: and I shall make all things well: and I will make all things well: and thou shalt see thyself that all manner of things shall be well." Where he saith "I may", I understand that the Father is meant: where he saith "I can", the Son: where he saith "I will", the Holy Ghost: where he saith "I shall", the unity of the blessed Trinity--three Persons and one Truth...(ch. 31, p. 96. Some editions invert the order of the first "shall" and "will" to fit Julian's explanation in the sentence following.)

In her references to the Trinity in this fashion, we become aware of a dynamic relationship within the Trinity. Julian finds it impossible to speak of the Father, or of the Son, or of the Spirit without immediately referring to the other Persons of the Trinity at the same time. The image she suggests is that each Person of the Godhead is constantly

giving to, and sharing in, the others. At no time is it possible to separate the Persons and treat them merely as individuals, not even in the event of the crucifixion--in which, it is obvious to her, only the incarnate Son hung on the cross. In this sense, whenever she speaks of any Person of the Trinity she is actually pointing to the other Persons, as though the object of her thought were constantly escaping into another object. She stresses that the Father cannot be seen except in the Son, the Son points us to the Father, the Spirit presents us with the Son, and so on.

It is important, at this point, to understand that in the constant reference of the Father to the Son, of the Son to the Spirit, the Spirit to the Son, Julian never suggests motion within the Trinity in the sense of change. The two are not to be equated; for we shall see that, in her theology, changeableness is a quality inherent in creation, in whatever is not-God. Thus, if there is a divine "procession" within God (as the scholastics called it), God nevertheless does not change:

This sight, where I saw him scorn the fiend's malice, was by the fastening of my understanding inwardly to our Lord; that is to say, an inward shewing of his truth, in his unchanging expression. This, as I see it, is a worshipful attribute of his--to be immutable. (ch. 13, p. 70).

The paradox of divine activity and divine stillness, each Person resting and working in the other two, is summed up by Julian at the close of her vision of the Lord and the servant. Seeing the Lord Jesus seated at the right hand of the Father, she "sees" the peace of God, the indwelling of the Trinity:

Now sitteth the Son, very God and very man, in his city in rest and in peace: the city which his Father hath allotted to him in his endless purpose; and the Father in the Son, and the Holy Ghost in the Father and in the Son. (ch. 51, p 143).

Although Julian could not have known it, her picture of the constant motion or activity within the Trinity, which is at the same time the stillness of indwelling, exactly reproduces a concept in Greek Orthodox theology, historically known as perichoresis. This term was first used by SS. Athanasius, Maximus the Confessor, and others, to describe the indwelling (or commingling) of divine and human natures in Christ; and later, to describe the indwelling of Persons which is the Being of the Trinity.⁷ In Latin, the word was translated as circumincessio; meaning, literally, "running-around".⁸ The image it evokes is a kind of merry-go-round, something which stands still and which at the same time is in constant motion.

Drawing these images together, we may derive from the Revelations two important concepts so far regarding the Being of the Trinity: First, the Being of God is Love (the "substance" of God is identical with his Love). Second, the nature of the Trinity, which cannot be seen directly by any human being, is recapitulated in the divine indwelling of the Incarnation: it is a perichoresis, or divine indwelling, of the Persons in one another, such that there are three Persons who are one Being. We are given, therefore, an objective definition of divine Love. It is not a "feeling" or an attribute of God, but a relationship of being, namely of indwelling, which is the Trinity.

7 For an account of the historical doctrine of perichoresis see Kelly, J.M.D., Early Christian Doctrines, Adam and Charles Black, London, 1973, pp. 402-449.

8 The writer is indebted to Dr. Gian Tellini, who has pointed out that the Latin word was variously spelled "circumincessio" (implying the concept of continuous movement) and "circuminsessio" (implying the concept of in-dwelling). Both concepts are implied in the Greek perichoresis, which originally described the boundary (circumference) of a circle, and that which it "contains". It is remarkable that Julian recapitulates the historical application of this term, first to the two natures in Christ (divinity and humanity), and then to the Being of the Trinity.

Technically, this would be known as an "ontological" approach to the concept of divine Charity (from Greek ὄν, being); and it is one of the most important concepts to underlie the Revelations. From this understanding of uncreated Charity, Julian will derive her concept of atonement, as an ontological relationship of God to man in Christ; and of the human response to God, in the indwelling of Christ in the soul, by the Holy Spirit, which mirrors the indwelling of the Persons of the Trinity in one another.

Before moving on to the relationship between the Trinity and creation, as Julian sees it, it will be important to touch upon two other points regarding the Being of God in himself. We notice that Julian never ceases to speak of the "goodness" of God (i.e., the divine Love), beginning with the first vision of the "Maker", "Lover" and "Keeper". We have seen that the Being of God itself defines what love is--not that God loves in a way that we might, or even in a way we can imagine, but that "love" as we know it mirrors the Being of God. Thus Julian can say,

God is all that is good, as I see it. And God hath made all that is made; and God loveth all that he hath made. (ch. 9, p. 61)

And she concludes the Revelations in part with the statement,

Charity unmade is God...(ch. 85, p. 207)

We have also seen that, for Julian, God is immutable. The conclusion which must be drawn from these two points together is that it is impossible for God not to love. Stated positively, Julian argues that there can be no wrath in God:

...I saw truly that our Lord was never wroth nor shall he ever be. For he is God: he is Good: he is Truth: he is Love: he is Peace. His Might, his Wisdom, his Charity and his Unity suffer him not to be wroth. For I saw truly that it is against the property of his Goodness. God is the goodness which may not be wroth; for God is naught but Goodness. (ch. 46, p. 124).

Julian has been regarded as bordering on heresy in this conclusion, on the grounds that the God of the Old Testament is manifestly a God of wrath.⁹ Without entering into a debate regarding the accuracy of this view of the Old Testament God--which would appear to be questionable at the very least--it is important to note that she is not unaware of anger in God, in the sense that God stands utterly opposed to sin.¹⁰ It is to be noted that Julian rehearsed the notion of God's anger many times daily, if she said her Office at all. The Ancrene Riwe prescribes that at the daily recitation of the Litany, the "Seven Penitential Psalms" are to be said--the very first of which begins, according to the Lay Folks' Prayer Book as follows:¹¹

Lord, repreue þou not /me/ in þi stronge veniaunce; neþer chastise þou me in þin ire!

Another of the psalms also begins this way:

Lord, repreue þou not me in þi stronge vengauce; neþer chastise þou me in þin ire!

And the Office for the Dead, also recited daily, includes the following:

Ry Lord, whanne þou schalt come to deme þe erpe, where shal y hide me fro þe face of þi wrappe? for y haue synned ful myche in my liyf.

V I drede my trespassis, & y am aschamed to-fore þee: whanne þou schalt come to iugement, nyle þou condempne me.

It should be clear from these that Julian is neither unaware of divine "wrappe",

9 Wolters, pp. 37-38, refers to Julian's "heterodoxy" and "heresy" in this regard: "This /Julian's view that there is no wrath in God/ may be very comforting, but it is not the catholic Faith, and it is surprising in one who otherwise is scriptural in her teaching." It is interesting that Wolters omits the reference to "Might", "Wisdom", "Charity" and "Unity" altogether in his translation, thereby omitting the reference to the Trinity, (p. 132).

10 See below, p. 229, n. 13, p. 387.

11 Lay Folks' Prayer Book, op. cit., pp. 37 ff.

nor does she wish to deny it, as it appears in the context of the Psalms or the passage in Job quoted above. She does wish to draw a distinction, however, between divine Judgement--God's Love in opposition to sin--and wrath or anger as we know it in ordinary human life. She equates the latter with sin and changeability, the very things contrary to the Being of God:

Wrath is naught else but a frowardness and a contrariness to peace and love, which cometh of failing of might, or of wisdom, or of goodness; which failing is not in God, but on our part. (ch. 48, p. 127).

The implications of this point will not be explored here, except to note the identity, once more, between the Love of God, and the Being of God. When Julian speaks of the "failing of might, or of wisdom, or of goodness", she refers directly to the Being of the Trinity. Wrath, as she sees it, is a "failing" (absence) of God--which failing would be impossible in God himself.

Finally, she draws an identity between God, who is the source of all things that have being, and Being itself:

God the blissful Trinity--which is everlasting Being, right as he is endless from without-beginning, right so it was in his endless purpose to make man's kind. (ch. 58, p. 158; cf. ch. 11)

An entire Revelation is given over to this point. The scribe's heading for the Twelfth Revelation (ch. 26, p. 90) reads: "The twelfth Revelation is that our Lord God is sovereign Being". An implication of this notion, which will be important further along, is that whatever opposes God, opposes being itself. Evil, therefore, tends toward non-being--because all being comes from God, and God is Being in himself. Conversely, whatever has being at all springs from the Love of God, which is the self-giving of the Trinity.

"Maker", "Keeper" and "Lover": the Divine Relationship to Space and Time

So far, our understanding of Julian's vision of the Trinity has been limited to the love which is within God: the love of the Father, Son and Spirit for one another, or rather, the relationship of Father, Son and Spirit which we call "Love". It will be noticed, however, that the activity of God the Trinity is revealed to Julian in the "working" of God, the constant participation of Love in creation: as "Maker", "Keeper", "Lover". Thus, while there is constant activity within the stillness of God--a constant self-giving of the Persons of the Trinity to one another (and working in one another)--there is also a constant self-giving, or movement, of God outside of himself.

Julian's idea of God's creative Love is traditionally known, in Orthodoxy, as ecstasis (the origin of our word "ecstasy"). Literally, ecstasis is "standing outside oneself"--just as our word "ecstasy" implies the state of being "carried away" in love, with our attention directed outside of ourselves. God is Love within himself, and also an uncreated Love which is expressed. The Trinity is constantly creating, giving, upholding: God is Maker, Keeper, and Lover. For Julian, the constant activity of God in self-giving is both a constant (even in a mathematical sense) as well as an activity. On one hand there is no change within the Trinity. This is the stillness within God, which is divine "rest and peace" (described in ch. 51, p. 133). On the other hand, God is constantly active in all he has made:

And therefore the blessed Trinity is ever fully pleased in all his works. All this he shewed me full blissfully, meaning it thus:

See, I am God: see, I am in all things: see, I do all things: see, I never lift my hands off my works, nor ever shall, without end: see, I lead all thing to the end that I ordain it to, from without-beginning by the same might, wisdom and love that I made it with...(ch. 11, p. 67).

This divine paradox was revealed to Julian twice: first in a vision which she saw with her own eyes (the First Revelation), and later in her understanding of what she had seen (the Third Revelation). First, Julian saw something small, like a hazelnut, resting in the palm of her hand (ch. 5). It represents, she says, all of creation resting in the Love of the Creator. Here the image is of peacefulness, or absolute dependence upon God; and she compares the littleness of the universe in her vision to a mathematical point, in contrast with the greatness of God:

Also in this he shewed a little thing, the size of a hazelnut, which seemed to lie in the palm of my hand; and it was as round as any ball. I looked upon it with the eye of my understanding, and thought, "What may this be?" I was answered in a general way, thus: "It is all that is made." I wondered how long it would last; for it seemed as though it might suddenly fade away to nothing, it was so small. And I was answered in my understanding: "It lasts, and ever shall last; for God loveth it. And even so hath every being--by the love of God." (ch. 5, p. 53).

At the same time, the vision is one of God's constant activity in keeping the "hazelnut" from vanishing into nothing:

In this little thing I saw three properties: The first is that God made it; the second, that God loveth it: the third, that God keepeth it...(ch. 5, p. 53).

In the Third Revelation (ch. 11), this vision is reiterated in another way. This time Julian has no physical vision like the hazelnut, but is given an insight into the nature of God: In her mind's eye she sees "God in a point". The idea of God existing "in a point" was common in the Middle Ages, as is well known. It was meant to convey the idea of God, the Creator, as the centre of a sphere: that is, the centre of the universe, the "unmoved Mover" who is equidistant from all points of space and time.¹² Julian interprets her vision to

12 Cf. The Divine Names, Ch. V, para. 6-8 (Rolt, op. cit., pp. 137-141); also cited by Reynolds, "Some Literary Influences", op. cit., p. 7.

mean that God is active in every point of space and time:

I saw God in a point: the sight, I say, was in my understanding, by which I saw that he is in all things. I beheld with attention, seeing and knowing in it, that he doeth all that is done...I saw truly that God doeth all things be they never so little. (ch. 11, p. 66)

or again,

For by the same blessed might, wisdom, and goodness that he made all things, unto the same, as their end, our good Lord continually leadeth them, and himself shall bring them thereto. And when it is time, we shall see it. The reason of this was shewed in the first Revelation, and more clearly in the third, where it is said, "I saw God in a point". (ch. 35, p. 103).

Having established that God is present and active in every thing that has being, she then reasons that the divine activity--even if it takes place within the realm of space and time--is nevertheless "outside" the reference of time altogether. Her concept is neither a Platonic one, in which there is seen to be an absolute dualism between the realms of Spirit and matter, of Creator and created; nor an Aristotelian one, in which God, the Prime Mover or Original Cause, is seen to have created the universe as an orderly system, thereafter remaining outside its bounds (as a kind of "container" of space and time). Perhaps she was familiar with the Thomist view, that the Creator both "contains" space and time and is "contained" by it in the way that the soul was said to "contain" the body.¹³ The image which she suggests, in any

Whether the image is meant to imply that God is equally distant from all points, or equally present to them, is perhaps a matter of interpretation. See Pepler, op. cit., pp. 326-327: "The point of the circle is equally present to every portion of the circumference. The point is in the circle, the circle in the point." (p. 327).

- 13 So Pepler (ibid., p. 326), who quotes Thomas regarding the presence of God to corporeal beings. See the Summa, Part I, Question 8, Art. 1, Repl. Obj. 2: "Although corporeal things are said to be in another, as in that which contains them, nevertheless spiritual things contain those things in which they are: as the soul contains the body. Hence also God is in things as containing them: nevertheless by a certain similitude to corporeal things,

case, is of an intimacy between God and creation, in which God acts freely without regard to time--because it is part of the created order which he permeates, and upholds. As before, there is no place in the Revelations in which Julian deliberately raises the question of the divine relationship to time; rather, it is an assumption which runs through her narrative, and which must be discerned from her treatment of other subjects.

The first evidence of Julian's conception of God's activity in time may be seen in her use of the past, present and future tenses in quoting Jesus' words in her visions. Here she suggests that, while events are perceived by human beings as historical (i.e., sequential), they are not perceived by God as taking place one before another. Rather, God apprehends all reality as a single "event" without regard to time. Therefore God is seen, in her visions, to speak of the same events indifferently, as future, present, and past. The Last Judgement, for example, is described as something which has already been accomplished, as something which is yet to come, and as something which is being brought about at the present time.

The eschatological emphasis of the Revelations is well known, and is often cited with regard to Julian's vision that "all shall be well" (the Thirteenth Revelation, ch. 27). In fact, however, Julian's understanding of the well-being

it is said that all things are in God; inasmuch as they are contained by Him." (Aquinas, Thomas, Summa Theologica, tr. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, vol. I, Benziger Brothers Inc., New York, 1947, p. 34).

Thomas' arguments refer primarily to the divine relationship to beings in space; but see also Part I, Q. 12, Art. 1-4 regarding the nature of time (which Thomas links to mutability) and of eternity (hence immutability). Thomas distinguished between eternity (timeless-ness) and the concept of time-without-end. Julian does not enter into a scholastic analysis of God with relation to space/time, but her First Revelation, especially as described in ch. 5 and 6, assumes divine immanence in all things, which things are "beclosed" in God.

of all things in the eschaton is not limited to a single vision, nor even to an event which is spoken of as decidedly in the future. Rather, it must be traced through the Revelations, where it is seen variously according to the immediate context of Julian's vision.

In the Third Revelation, at the same time in which Julian sees God "in a point", she observes that so far she has had no vision of sin at all (ch. 11, p. 66). This vision, as we have seen, concentrates on the assertion that God does all things, and supports all manner of being. Here Julian recapitulates the theology of the Ephesians, to say that in all things God's purpose is being achieved:

I saw full truly that he changeth never his purpose in any manner of thing, nor ever shall, without end. For there was nothing unknown to him in the rightness of his decrees, from without-beginning. And therefore all things were set in order, ere any thing was made, as they were to stand without end. And no manner thing shall fail in that point; for he hath made all things in the fullness of his goodness. (ch. 11, p. 67).

Her interpretation of this vision is that all things are well, because all things occur only by the prior will of God. Her recollection later is that at the time, when she did not see sin at all, "it was then I saw that all is well" (ch. 34, p. 102).

Subsequently, however, Julian becomes acutely aware of the presence of sin, and of the fact that it alone separates her from the holiness of God (the Thirteenth Revelation, ch. 27). It then occurs to her that if sin had never been allowed to exist, "all would have been well" (ch. 27, p. 91). The change in Julian's disposition, from reassurance to doubt, is met by a shift in emphasis in her visions. In reply to her anxiety, Jesus speaks the familiar words for which Julian is best known:

But Jesus, who in this vision informed me of all that I needed, answered with this word saying: "Sin must needs be, but all shall

be well. All shall be well, All shall be well; and all manner thing shall be well." (ch. 27, p. 91).

When Julian again expresses doubt that all can be well in view of the "great harm" which has resulted from sin (ch. 29), she is reassured once more that since God has already remedied the sin of Adam (referring, here, to the "har- rowing of hell" and the crucifixion): "I shall make well all that is less" (ch. 29, p. 94). Still later, her doubts are allayed by the divine promise that:

I may make all things well: and I can make all things well: and I shall make all things well: and I will make all things well: and thou shalt see thyself that all manner of things shall be well. (ch. 31, p. 96).

Jesus' promise to Julian is given in terms of divine power ("I may"), divine wisdom ("I can"), divine intention ("I will") and, together, divine activity or unity ("I shall"--which may be viewed as the realization of divine potential, the movement from divine will to created reality). She concludes this section of the Revelations, therefore, by referring to the eschaton in which the mysteries of God's activity will become clear:

In the third shewing, then, where I saw that God does all that is done, I saw not sin; it was then I saw that all is well. But when God shewed me sin, then he said, "All shall be well". (ch. 34, p. 102).

Thus in the two "shewings" Julian sees that, on the one hand, all things are "well" already, because of God's continuing action; and that all things shall be well, owing to God's future activity. This would be unremarkable in itself, but it may be coupled with her discussion of the events which make all things well--particularly the Last Judgement, and the Incarnation and crucifixion, which are seen both as events which take place in history and which take place (from God's point of view) without reference to time.

Throughout the Thirteenth Revelation, Julian refers to the eschatological event of the Judgement, particularly with reference to damnation. She says, for example, that:

...man on earth that dieth out of the faith of Holy Church, that is to say, those who are heathens; and also man that hath received christening but liveth an unchristian life and so dieth out of charity--all these shall be damned to hell without end, as Holy Church teacheth me to believe. (ch. 32, p. 99).

We have seen that her emphasis is on the activity of God at the time of Judgement, in which all things will be made well and will be seen to be well. Earlier, however, Julian expresses the belief that judgement is not merely a future event, but one which takes place continually:

Then said I to them that were with me: "This day is doomsday for me". This I said because I thought I would die; for on that day that a man or woman dieth, he is judged, particularly: and so he shall be, without end, as I see it. (ch. 8, p. 60).

It is possible for her to hold both without contradiction, not by suggesting two different times of judgement, but by seeing both our day of death and the eschaton as a single event from God's point of view--even though they are separated by time from our own point of view, and even though it appears to us that people die at different times. This concept is borne out once more in Julian's remarkable view of creation, in which the creation of humanity (in Adam) coincides with the Incarnation; and the moment of the "fall" of Adam is seen to be the same "moment" as the Incarnation, and even as the crucifixion itself.

This most important example of Julian's concept of God with relation to time is to be seen in her visual parable of the Lord and servant (the Fourteenth Revelation). The chapters which recount the parable (particularly ch. 51-58) several times regard temporal sequence with indifference. We shall

consider the vision in detail further along, with reference to the creation of humanity, to the "fall" and salvation, and to the final Judgement.¹⁴ Here we note that the vision as a whole is without temporal reference. It portrays at once the fall of Adam; the present situation of all sinners before God; and the nature of the Last Judgement, which is (from our point of view) still to take place. Julian is aware at the time that her vision does not recount simply the historical event (as she understood it) of creation and the fall:

...I saw many diverse properties that could in no way be ascribed to the single Adam. (ch. 51, p. 134).

Perhaps this contributed to her confusion regarding the meaning of what she saw (often expressed in ch. 51--e.g., "I understood not all what this parable meant", p. 139). She perceives, then, that every event has a multiple reference:

The Lord is God the Father: the servant is the Son Jesus Christ. The Holy Ghost is the equal love which is in them both. When Adam fell, God's Son fell; because of the true oneing which was made in heaven, God's Son could not be separated from Adam...Adam fell from life to death into the deeps of this wretched world, and after that into hell. God's Son fell, with Adam, into the deeps of the Maiden's womb, who was the fairest daughter of Adam; and that, for to excuse Adam from blame in heaven and earth; and mightily he fetched him out of hell. (ch. 51, p. 140).

In part, she demonstrates the medieval concept that events on earth mirror events which are taking place (or have taken place) in heaven. Thus, in Christ's descent into hell following the crucifixion:

...then he went into hell; and when he was there, then he raised up the great host out of the deep abyss, which had been truly knit to him in high heaven. (ch. 51, p. 142).

At the same time, the implication is that what has already taken place, for God, may be yet to take place on earth or even (as here) in hell.

¹⁴ See below, pp. 237, 428ff

Finally, with regard to creation of humanity, Julian indicates that there is no distinction (for God) between the "moment" of creation for Adam and for the humanity of Christ, or for any human beings. At first she appears to suggest an argument, held by some medievals, that because creation takes place in the timelessness of God, it must be regarded as eternal, that is, coexistent with God.¹⁵ However, her point is confined to the purpose of God in creation, which purpose she identifies with God's love:

For I saw that God never began to love mankind; but right as mankind shall be in endless bliss, bringing to fulfilment the joy of God relative to his works: right so the same mankind hath been, in the foreknowledge of God, known and loved from without-beginning, according to his righteous plan. (ch. 53, p. 148).

The timelessness of God's love for humanity, it is to be noted, is not merely that it has no beginning, but that it has no reference to time whatever--it is time-less. For this reason Julian is able to say that the human response to God's love is also without reference to time, in his view:

For ere that he made us, he loved us; and when we were made we loved him. (ch. 53, p. 148).

The point is made again when Julian discusses the relationship between Christ's humanity and our own. She reaches the remarkable conclusion that all human beings were made at one time--even though, obviously, we are born at different times:

God the blissful Trinity--which is everlasting Being, right as he is endless from without-beginning, right so it was in his endless purpose to make man's kind. Which fair kind was first prepared for his own Son, the second Person. And whenso he would, by full accord of all the Trinity, he made all of us at once. (ch. 58, p. 158).

¹⁵ See Gilson, op. cit., p. 374, with reference to this doctrine as held by the Averroes, and challenged by St. Bernard.

We note once again that she does not attempt to demonstrate that all souls were created at once, and were then "released" at different times (a view condemned as heretical, which was put forward by Origen and which tended to recur in medieval Neoplatonism).¹⁶ She does say that our human nature (our "kindly substance") is "applied to us by our creation" (p. 159), but she is not shown a vision of souls waiting to be born. Rather, she sees all human beings participating in the birth of the Son, in whose humanity we share. This is possible, once again, because God regards all human beings at once--without regard to time.

Two "Secrets" in God: the Nature of Revelation

We have now come to the third aspect of the Trinity which Julian perceives in her "shewings", and which underlies her thought in the Revelations. It is the nature of God's self-revelation to man, specifically in the person of Jesus Christ (God dwelling in humanity), and in Julian's visions themselves. Her understanding of divine revelation is based directly on her grasp of the nature of divine Love, which is identical with the Being of the Trinity.

If the Being of God is identical with his "substance", which is to say his Love, it follows that whenever God loves, the whole Trinity is communicating himself (remembering that Love is not something which God does, but which God is). Here Julian develops two important points: first, that God is consistent with himself--that is, whatever God is in himself he is also toward us, although only insofar as we are capable of understanding him; second, that God and creation are intimately related, such that we cannot know one without knowing the other. Therefore, on the one hand it will be impossible to see the Love

¹⁶ See Kelly, op. cit., pp. 128 and 155.

of the Trinity without at the same time seeing the Love of God in what he has made, loves, and keeps; and on the other hand, it will be impossible to see God, the Trinity, at all, except within the realm of creation itself. More precisely, the Trinity reveals himself in the person of Christ, which is to say, in the humanity (as it were) of God. In the person of Jesus, uncreated Charity moves out of himself to become created charity--the Love of God in creation.

It is difficult to appreciate Julian's concept of divine revelation immediately, because of the paradox which is involved. On the one hand, Julian will assert quite plainly that God cannot be seen; and on the other hand, she continually maintains that it is possible to "behold" God in this life, and even that she has seen God (in Christ) in her own visions. The solution lies in the fact that, for Julian, it is not possible for the creature to behold the Being of God directly; but that, at the same time, God conveys himself to man in his revelation--specifically, in the "beholding" of Christ, who bears the likeness, or appearance, of God.

We have already seen Julian's statement that our vision of God is not direct, but comes through Christ:

...man is blinded in this life; and therefore we may not see our Father, God, as he is. But...he sheweth himself in homely fashion, as man. (ch. 51, p. 137).

The paradox of beholding God in Christ, though we cannot behold the inner Being of the Trinity, is summed up in another passage which deserves to be quoted at length:

I know well that the more the soul seeth of God, the more she desireth him, by grace. But when we see him not so, then we feel need and cause to pray, because of our weakness...

Thus I saw that whenever we see the need for prayer, then our Lord is with us, helping our desire. But when, of his special grace,

we behold him plainly and see no further need of prayer, then we are with him; for he draweth us to him by love...It is thus that we may, with his sweet grace in our own meek, continual prayer, come into him now, in this life, by many secret touchings and sweet ghostly sights and feelings measured out to us according as our simpleness can support it. This is wrought, and shall be, by the grace of the Holy Ghost until we die in longing for love. Then shall we all come into our Lord--ourselves clearly knowing, God abundantly having--until we are all endlessly hid in God--him truly seeing and abundantly feeling, him ghostly hearing and delectably smelling, him all sweetly swallowing. And there shall we see God face to face. Homely and all-abundantly the creature that is made shall see and endlessly behold God who is the Maker. For no man may see God and live after, that is, in this mortal life. But when he will shew himself here, of his special grace, he strengtheneth the creature above the self, and measureth the shewing, according as this is his will and is profitable for the time. (ch. 43, pp. 120-121).

It should be noted here that clearly, "no man may see God and live after... in this mortal life"; and at the same time, that God "will shew himself here". The "shewing" that we receive is "measured", however, and does not involve seeing God face to face. In context (particularly with reference to the preceding chapters, which identify "our Lord" with the Saviour) it appears that Julian is referring to the vision of Jesus' face as the vision of God which we receive in this life, which vision spurs the soul to want to see God in himself. The point is not merely that we could not comprehend God in this life, even if we were to see him directly--the position held by Thomas Aquinas, and generally accepted by medieval mystics of the West--but that we cannot see God directly at all, in this life, except by the grace of the Holy Spirit, who manifests God to us in Christ. Nevertheless at these times, when the Lord is with us, "we can do no more but behold him and enjoy" (p. 121).

That God is incomprehensible to the created intellect is indeed held by Julian. For her, the fact that we are creatures and God is creator is a relationship to God which we can neither change, nor grasp with our reason.

In the Revelations the point is made repeatedly that we cannot make ourselves "gods", in order to analyze where we stand with respect to God, or to analyze his Love. We cannot comprehend God, even though God "comprehends" us, in the sense of surrounding or supporting us. Thus, Julian first makes the point that God enwraps us with his infinite Love:

I saw that he is everything that is good and strengthening for our help. He is our clothing that, for love, wrappeth us up and windeth us about; embraceth us, and becloseth us and hangeth about us, for tender love; so that he can never leave us...(ch. 5, p. 52).

For as the body is clad in clothes, and the flesh in skin, and the bones in flesh, and the heart in the breast; so are we, soul and body, clad and enclosed in the goodness of God. Yea, and more homely; for they all vanish, wasting away. But the goodness of God is ever whole and most near to us, without any comparison...(ch. 6, p. 56)

Our high Father almighty God, who is Being, he knew us and loved us from before-any-time. Of which knowing, in his full marvellous deep Charity, by the foreseeing endless counsel of all the blessed Trinity, he willed that the second Person should become our Mother...And therefore it belongeth to us to love our God, in whom we have our being...(ch. 59, p. 162).

She then observes that, in view of his infinite Love, we are small and insignificant:

With marvelling the creature seeth his God, his Lord and his Maker, how he is so high, so great and so good in comparison with him that is made, that the creature seemeth as naught to himself. And yet the brightness and the clearness of truth and wisdom maketh him to see and to know that he is made of love...(ch. 44, p. 121).

His Love, in fact, is incomprehensible:

Our soul is so preciously loved by him that is highest that it passeth beyond the knowing of all creatures. That is to say, there is no creature made that can know how much and how sweetly and how tenderly our Maker loveth us. (ch. 6, p. 56).

Thus, because God is God, there is a sense in which uncreated Love must remain ultimately hidden from us. In this sense, Julian argues that although God reveals himself to us, the Trinity is nevertheless a "secret"; and his hiddenness

applies not only to the Being of God within himself, but also to the deeds which are the expression of his Love outside himself, into creation:

To the understanding of this /the work of the Trinity in drawing human beings to himself in love/ was the soul led by love and drawn by might in every shewing. That it is thus, our good Lord shewed; and how it is thus, truly of his great goodness he will have us desire to learn: that is to say, in as much as it is proper for his creatures to know it. For everything that this simple soul understood, God willeth should be shewn and known. But those things he will have secret, mightily and wisely he himself hideth, for love. For I saw in the same shewing that many a secret thing is hid, until the time that God of his goodness hath made us worthy to see it. Therewith I am well satisfied, abiding our Lord's will in these high marvels. (ch. 46, p. 125).

In theology, the "secret" aspect of the Trinity is known as the apophatic Trinity: the Trinity which cannot be known, or is above talking about (apo, above, + phēmi, talk about). On the other hand, we have seen that in a real sense, the Trinity is known by us intimately--certainly by Julian, who "saw" the glory of the Trinity in her sixteen "shewings". Her book, in fact, is precisely about the revelation of divine Love to her. The image which Julian gives us, however, is not of a kind of knowing in which we understand a concept or learn a fact. Rather, she is concerned with a personal knowledge of the Trinity: the kind of knowledge which comes as God enwraps us, though we cannot embrace him; supports us, though we do not support him; loves us, though we cannot love him with the same Love.¹⁷ Therefore the Trinity who is above

17 Two kinds of "knowledge" discussed by the scholastics were scientia (discursive knowledge) and sapientia (wisdom). Walsh identifies the latter with contemplative knowledge, in which knowledge of God re-forms the soul, and suggests that the former was considered "proper to the lower part of reason". In his view, Julian simply utilized this Augustinian distinction, which is found also in Hilton and The Cloud (Walsh, James, Pre-Reformation English Spirituality, Burns and Oates, London, c. 1961, p.204).

The present point, however, is a different one. Julian's theology suggests a distinction between discursive knowledge, and personal knowledge (not, "wisdom" or "contemplative knowledge", but knowledge of God in the intimate, familial sense of "homely loving"). The distinction is perhaps like that between the German wissen and kennen.

knowing, so far as creatures are concerned, at the same time makes himself personally known to creatures, and delights particularly in our knowing him--because that is the nature of ecstatic Love:

It is his will that we believe that we see him continually, though it seemeth to us that the sight is but little. And in this belief, he maketh us to get ever more grace. For he will be seen, and he will be sought; he will be waited on and he will be trusted...(ch. 10, p. 63).

Julian knows the Trinity only insofar as she is aware of being known by God--not merely in the sense that anyone might be vaguely aware of God's presence, but in the intimate, personal sense in which she experienced revelation, the "shewing" of God himself to her. We have seen that this shewing took place in the person of Jesus, in whom Julian recognized the whole Trinity as revealing himself:

Even so I conceived truly that it was himself, God and man, the same that suffered for me, who shewed it to me--without any intermediary. In the same shewing, suddenly the Trinity filled full my heart with utmost joy (thus I understood it shall be in heaven without end unto all that come thither). (ch. 4, p. 51).

Thus it is necessary to speak of uncreated Love paradoxically, as both hidden and known. Julian therefore describes two kinds of truths or "secrets", so to speak, in God. One of these is the Being of God in himself, the indwelling Love of the Trinity which is really beyond our idea of "being" or of "love" (the apophatic Trinity). The other "secret" is the being of God towards man--the Love which is the Son of God made man, making known the Trinity to us. One is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit so living in one another that they are perfectly one; the other is the Son of God born into creation, yet so living in the Father, in the Holy Spirit, that they are perfectly one. The latter is the "created charity" which we can embrace, because it is the embracement of man by God:

He gave me understanding of two parts of his truth. One part is our Saviour and our Salvation. This blessed part is open, clear and fair, and light and plenteous...This our part is our Lord. The other is hidden and closed to us--that is, all that belongeth not to our salvation. For that is our Lord's secret counsel. It belongeth to the royal Lordship of God to hold his secret counsels in place. And it belongeth to his servants, out of obedience and reverence, not to wish to know his counsels. Yet our Lord hath pity and compassion on us in that some creatures make themselves so busy therein. (ch. 30, p. 95).

And again:

Our Lord shewed two manners of secrets. One is this great secret with all the secret points that belong thereto. And these secrets he willeth we to know as hid until the time that he will clearly shew them to us. The others are the secrets which he himself shewed openly in this Revelation. These secrets which he willeth to make open and known to us; and he willeth us to know that it is his will for us to know them. They are secrets to us, not only because he wisheth them to be secrets to us, but on account of our blindness and our unknowing, for which he has great pity. Therefore he willeth to make them open to us himself, so that we may know him and love him, and cleave to him. (ch. 34, pp. 101-102).

In the passages quoted here, and in many others, it becomes clear that for Julian, knowing God does not depend simply upon our desire to know him (although God wants us to desire him) nor upon our ability to reason. Our knowledge of God is in fact limited by these things, in the sense that they are imperfect. Knowledge of God depends, rather, upon the Love which comes to us from God; for God wants us to know him personally, and to desire him--rather than to attempt to know about him. Referring to her vision of the crucifixion, she writes:

This I saw bodily, but with difficulty and obscurely. I desired more bodily light so as to have seen more clearly. And I was answered in my reason: "If God willeth to shew thee more, he shall be thy light; thou needest none but him". For I saw him and sought him.

We are, here, so blind and so unwise that we can never seek God until the time that he of his goodness sheweth himself to us. And when we see something of him, graciously, then are we moved, by this same grace, to seek with a great desire to see him more blissfully.

And thus I saw him and sought him; I had him and I wanted him. This is, and should be, our ordinary working in this life, as I see it. (ch. 10, p. 62).

In fact, the attempt to know about God in any impersonal way, apart from his own revelation, is futile, and a hindrance from knowing him at all:

It is God's will that we have great regard to all the deeds that he hath done. For he willeth by this regard that we know, trust and believe all that he shall do; but it evermore behoveth us to leave off considering what that deed shall be...For in our Lord's meaning I saw truly that the more we busy ourselves about knowing his secrets in that or in any other thing, the farther off we shall be from the knowing. (ch. 33, p. 101).

Finally, Julian argues that, if the self-revelation of God to man is the embrace of divine Love, the most intimate means of communication of God with man is not with words, but in seeing and touching:

Afterwards, before God shewed any words, he permitted me to behold in him, for a suitable time, all that I had seen and all the understanding that was therein, so far as the simpleness of my soul could take it in. (ch. 13, p. 69).

And, in the passage we have already seen:

It is thus that we may, with his sweet grace in our own meek, continual prayer, come into him now, in this life, by many secret touchings and sweet ghostly sights and feelings, measured out to us according as our simpleness can support it. (ch. 43, p. 120).

It is possible, therefore, to know the Trinity in this life, intimately and personally (in the person of Jesus), according to God's will to make himself known. The second "secret" of the Trinity is meant to be revealed, and is revealed in Love. The term which is sometimes used for this kind of truth within God (as opposed to that which cannot be known in this life) is the cataphatic Trinity (kat, down or among). Another term, which we shall use here, is the economic Trinity--the word "economic" having nothing to do with money, of course, but stemming from the Greek word which means to administer or communicate. The revelation of the Trinity to man--the economy of

God--is the person of Jesus Christ, in whom the Trinity communicates himself to mankind, in his love: "where Jesus appeareth, the Blessed Trinity is understood, as I see it."

It is important here to grasp the full implications of what Julian is saying about the revelation of God to man in Christ: To know God is not to know about the Trinity, but to know the Trinity personally--that is, to experience uncreated Love. The Love of God towards us is the same Love as that within the Trinity, according to God's desire for us to know it. Therefore to experience God's Love is to experience God himself. Insofar as it is possible for creatures to know God at all, in the economy of God, this knowledge immediately implies a sharing in the Being of God, the Trinity: the secret communion within God, which at the same time is God's ecstatic Love.

Julian says that we may "come into him [i.e., into God] now, in this life..." While it remains impossible for man to understand the Trinity, or to "penetrate" the Trinity in order to participate in the nature of God (or in order to analyze God), it is nevertheless possible for God to embrace man, and to comprehend him in Love. By God's grace, as Julian understands it, we may be included into the Trinity, to share in the perichoresis or Love which is God. When this happens, we not only experience uncreated Love touching us from outside ourselves, but we are able to experience this uncreated Love from within. We are drawn into God:

Thus our Good Lord answered all the questions and doubts that I could bring up, saying for full comfort: "I may make all things well: and I can make all things well: and I shall make all things well: and I will make all things well: and thou shalt see thyself that all manner of things shall be well." ...And where he saith "thou shalt see thyself", I understand the oneing [i.e., the union] of all mankind that shall be saved into the blissful Trinity. (ch. 31, p. 96).

When the uncreated Charity of the Trinity proceeds out of himself to become

"created charity", it is both the movement of God into the realm of creation, and the inclusion of creation into God--ultimately, the indwelling of mankind in God.

We shall see that for Julian, the involvement (as it were) of man into God also has the double characteristic, like the Trinity, of being known by us and yet remaining unknown to us, at least in this life. Julian is able to speak of it as a process, yet as something which is already complete: in the divine economy it is a process, but in the unknowable Trinity it is something which has already taken place, in the person of the Son of God. Therefore Julian says that in this life we are seeking God, coming into him, beholding him; yet in after-life, "then shall we all come into our Lord. And there shall we see God face to face."

III

CREATED CHARITY: OUR SOUL IN GOD (THE LOVE OF THE TRINITY FOR MANKIND)

What is man þat þou art myndeful of him? eþer þe sone of a virgyn,
for þou visitist him?

Thou has meed him a litil lasse þan aungelis; þou hast corrouned him
wip glorie & honour, & hast ordeyned him aboue
þe werkis of þin hondis.

--Psalm 8:5-7, from the
Hours of the Blessed Virgin

CHAPTER ONE: MYSTICAL "ONEING" IN THE REVELATIONS

Our Soul in God: the Concept of Theosis

To what extent is it really possible for man to live "within" God? We have suggested that for Julian, the economy of the Trinity in Jesus Christ is far more than a simple revelation that God exists, or even that God is Love. Divine revelation means the inclusion of man into God's Love--man taking on the nature of God. For her, it is not something which happens merely ideally or "spiritually" (which today usually means "only in our minds" or, perhaps, "after we are dead"); rather, it is a union with God which takes place now, existentially, really--in our bodies as well as in our minds. It had its beginning before creation, in the divine Love of God. It has its expression in our own lives as we are included into God, as it were, in the intimate relationship which is his Love.

In the modern Church, in much of the world, the idea that man could become "one" with God is seldom expressed. For some, it may appear to be a kind of blasphemy to say that man is capable of participating in any sense in the Trinity. Historically, however, this concept is at the heart of the Christian faith. It is to be found in scripture as, for example, in 2 Peter 1:3-4:

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature.

In Greek mystical theology, this concept is referred to as theosis (to be "God-ified"). In this view, man not only has the capacity to become one with God, but this union has already taken place, historically, in the person of Christ. In addition, there is a process of theosis in the life of every Christian

as he lives in Christ and Christ lives in him.¹ It is a mystical union, which unites us to God. Julian is unambiguous in her assertion that the Christian (who is always the subject of her visions) may become, and already is, a partaker of divine nature; and she sees this relationship of indwelling as the purpose of the soul:

Highly ought we to rejoice that God dwelleth in our soul; and much more highly ought we to rejoice that our soul dwelleth in God. Our soul is made to be God's dwelling-place; and the dwelling of our soul is God, which is unmade. A high understanding it is inwardly, to see and to know that our soul, that is made, dwelleth in God in substance. Of which substance, by God, we are what we are. And I saw no difference between God and our substance; but as it were all God. (ch. 54, p. 150)

In this passage as elsewhere, she is quick to point out that the union of man to God is not something which takes place by man's initiative or by his power, nor does it mean that man ceases to be what he is--a created human being. But God embraces man (and therefore creation, our "soul, that is made") and includes us into himself, as it were, so that we are permeated by God:

And yet my understanding took it that our substance is in God; that is to say, that God is God, and our substance is a creature in God.

For the almighty Truth of the Trinity, he is our Father; for he made us and keepeth us in him. And the deep Wisdom of the Trinity is our Mother, in whom we are enclosed. And the high Goodness of the Trinity is our Lord; and in him we are enclosed, and he in us. We are enclosed in the Father; and we ~~are~~ enclosed in the Son; and we are enclosed in the Holy Ghost. And the Father is enclosed in us, and the Son is enclosed in us, and the Holy Ghost is enclosed in us; all-mightiness, all-wisdom, and all-goodness--one God, one Lord. (ch. 54, p. 150)

The union of man to God takes place specifically in the person of Jesus Christ, who is, in himself, both God and man. This fact is central to whatever

1 A valuable account of the doctrine of theosis in Orthodoxy is in Meyendorff, op. cit., pp. 163-165 and passim. See also Lossky, The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church, op. cit., ch. 5 and passim.

Julian understands about the human relationship to God:

We know in our faith--and it was also shewed in all the Revelations--that Christ Jesus is both God and man. In respect of his Godhead he is himself highest bliss, and was so from without beginning and so shall be without end--the self-same endless bliss, which can never be increased or diminished. This was plenteously seen in every shewing; and particularly in the twelfth, where he saith: "I it am that is Highest". In respect of his manhood (this too is known in our faith and was also shewed), Christ having the power of the Godhead suffered pains and passion and died, for love, in order to bring us to his bliss. These are the works of Christ's manhood wherein he hath joy...(ch. 31, p. 96)

Thus, Jesus represents what is possible for human life: our participation in the indwelling or communion of God and man, to share in God's "bliss". In him, furthermore, God is accomplishing a transformation of human lives even now, by indwelling ("beeslosing") the Christian in divine Love. In Jesus, Julian will see the human relationship to God as it is, as it is becoming, and as it eventually will be. But above all, it is Jesus himself who accomplishes our union to God in his own body. Her focus is never taken off the humanity of Jesus Christ, because there the uncreated Trinity enters creation to form a spiritual and physical union with man:

For in that same time that God knit himself to our body in the maiden's womb, he took our sensual soul. In taking which, having enclosed us all in himself, he oned it to our substance. In this oneing he was perfect man; for Christ, having knit ~~in~~ himself every man that shall be saved, is perfect man. (ch. 57, p. 157)

The very physical nature of Julian's imagery is noteworthy: that God knit himself to our body, taking on our sensual soul, uniting it to our substance.² Nor does the bodily nature of this "oneing" end somehow in death, or gradually fade away into a more "spiritual" (or non-physical) relationship. God does not deny the physical world in any sense, because he has made it. Julian points

2 The metaphor of "knitting" is also used by Walter Hilton to describe the union of Jesus to man's soul. Cf. The Scale, Book I, ch. 12 (Underhill, op. cit., p. 25); The Goad of Love, ch. 1 (Kirchberger, op. cit., p. 49).

out that in Jesus, humanity is bodily taken up into God, where it remains forever:

And thus Christ is our way; us surely leading in his laws. And Christ, in his body, mightily beareth us up into heaven. For I saw that Christ, us all having in him --that shall be saved by him--worshipfully presenteth his Father in heaven with us. Which present with full thanks his Father receiveth, and courteously giveth it unto his Son, Jesus Christ. Which gift and working is joy to the Father, bliss to the Son, and liking to the Holy Ghost. (ch. 55, p. 151. *Emphasis added*)

Or in another place:

But it is his will that we trust that he is lastingly with us; and this in three ways. He is with us in heaven, true man, us updrawing into his own person...He is with us on earth, us leading...And he is with us in our soul, endlessly dwelling, ruling and guiding us...(ch. 52, p. 145)

Heaven itself is so intimately related to the humanity of Jesus that, for Julian, it is completely identified with it:

Whilst I experienced this [a vision of Christ's face during the crucifixion] my understanding was lifted up into heaven; and there I saw three heavens. At this sight I greatly marvelled, and thought: "I see three heavens, and all are of the blessed manhood of Christ, and no one of them is greater, no one is less: no one is higher, no one is lower: but all are equal in blessedness." (ch. 22, p. 83)

Because she is concerned with the indwelling of God in man--the communion of humanity and Trinity, uncreated Love and created love--she is essentially concerned with two kinds of revelation: the discovery of the Trinity in humanity (in the person of Christ, and therefore in ourselves); and the discovery, in the Trinity, of humanity (in the person of Christ, and therefore ourselves):

And thus I saw full surely that it is readier to us and more easy, to come to the knowing of God than to know our own soul. For our soul is so deep-grounded in God and so endlessly treasured, that we may not come to the knowing thereof until we have, first, knowing of God, who is the Maker; to whom it is owed. But notwithstanding I saw that we have, of our fullness, the desire wisely and truly to know where it is: and that is, in God. And thus, by the gracious leading of the Holy Ghost, we shall know them both in one. Whether we are stirred to know God or our own soul, both stirrings are good and true. (ch. 56, pp. 153-154)

It will take considerable care to understand what Julian means here without attributing to her concepts which she does not hold. We can already see, however,

a double movement in her thought, in which it will be impossible to separate our understanding of the Trinity from our understanding of human nature, or the human soul. Her concept of "oneing" is therefore approached from essentially two standpoints: the "oneing" which we perceive in the humanity of Christ, that is, in space and time; and the "oneing" which we do not immediately perceive, in the Son of God--taking place within the Trinity, without reference to space and time.

For this reason, the second dimension of divine Love is called "charity made", or created charity. It is the created mirror of uncreated Charity: the outpouring of uncreated Love into creation, in the act of creation itself, in the love which God has for what he has made, and in God's constant work in creation, "keeping" what he has made in love. In particular, Julian describes her vision of created charity as "our soul in God", humanity at one with the Trinity.

She will describe humanity as bound to God in three ways: first, in the human capacity to be at one with God, owing to his love for us, and to human nature itself, which is created in his image; second, in the actual indwelling of humanity in God in the person of Christ; and third, in the activity of the Spirit in the human soul, such that "oneing" (as she calls it) becomes an experiential reality. Because she uses the word "soul" in a general way to mean our self, or whole human nature, we shall think of her vision more generally as human **nature**, or human personality, in relation to God: our selves in God.

Julian's concept of human nature--that is, what it means to be a fulfilled human being--proceeds directly from her understanding of God, the Trinity, and cannot be separated from it. Whatever we are when we are fulfilled human beings reflects the being of God, who made us:

And thus was my understanding led, of God, to see in him and to realize, to understand and to know, that our soul is a made trinity, like to the unmade blessed Trinity, known and loved from without-beginning... (ch. 55, pp. 152-153)

A major implication of this idea will be, therefore, that human beings find fulfillment only by participating in Charity: that is, by loving and by being loved. More especially, we are meant to recognize the love-relationship which we already have with God and respond to his Love, allowing it to fulfill our lives. Here, Julian will see Jesus to be the True human being, (the "perfect man", uniting all souls who are saved), who is at once the model for humanity as we are meant to have it, and in whose humanity we share.

The Ontology of "Oneing"

We have seen that the word which Julian uses to define the relationship of "our soul in God", or the indwelling of humanity in divinity, is "oneing". This charming and simple word is the origin of the word atonement (originally, at-one-ment), and acts as a kind of summary of Julian's theology of "homely love" in the Revelations. In the book several concepts are developed which together form her understanding of oneing. On the one hand, oneing is an activity--in particular, a process or continuous activity, rather than a single event. On the other hand, it will be described from a divine point of view as she was given it in her "shewing"; so that it is seen without respect to space and time, hence, a single "event" in the person of Christ, or as a state of being. The process of oneing in Christ is understood as a reflection, or movement, of the being of God into humanity; and the "created charity" which she sees is a mirror of the nature of the Trinity as she has seen it in each of her visions.

If we now recall her understanding of the Trinity point by point as it is implied in the Revelations, we shall see it reflected entirely in her grasp of

oneing. The indwelling of the Persons of the Trinity is reflected in the indwelling of God in man; the procession of the Persons of the Trinity is reflected in the outpouring of God outside himself into humanity; the mutual Love of the Trinity is reflected in the love of Jesus for the Father and in the love which human beings are able to feel by the indwelling of Christ in us; the constant activity within the Trinity (the perichoresis) is reflected in the constant activity of God's self-giving to humanity and the human activities of seeking, beholding, and experiencing God; the stillness of the Trinity is reflected in the steadfastness of Christ's love and in the rest and peace which we experience in his presence. Humanity itself will be seen as a reflection of the Trinity, since God made humanity in the self-expression of his Love. All the aspects of oneing which she perceives in her visions are simply manifestations of the Love of God in humanity itself.

The reflection of divine Love into humanity is therefore seen to take place in essentially three ways: in the creation of humanity (our capacity for God); in the maturing or "increasing" of humanity (to which she also refers as our "remaking" in Christ); and in the perfecting or fulfillment of human beings through the indwelling Christ. She views all three of these as part of a process of oneing, and we may wish to think of them as stages in the development of humanity into God. First, humanity is created with the capacity to be oned to God. This capacity is never lost, even in sin, because of the infinite and eternal love which God has for mankind. Second, there is a re-creation of humanity in the life of Jesus Christ, to which she refers as the "mercy" of God. This aspect of human development is also described as a continuous process of re-creation (our "increasing" or growing up), since it involves the continuous

indwelling of the incarnate Son in the soul of the individual. Here she is concerned with the effect of divine Love on human nature, not simply in an abstract or "theological" sense, but in an immediate, experiential, even physical sense: in terms of our personal development as we are loved. Finally, Julian describes the maturity of fulfillment of humanity as the Holy Spirit works to perfect us and draws us into the indwelling Love of the Trinity in eternal life. The continuous work of the Spirit, drawing human beings into God, is what Julian refers to as the "grace" of God, and appears as the human response to God's love. The final aspect of oneing is an extensive subject in the Revelations and will be discussed last as "charity given".³

In the Revelations each aspect of oneing reflects the Trinity in its own way: God the Father creates human nature (which Julian calls our "kindly substance"), and sustains it--preserving it intact out of his Love; God the Son becomes incarnate and in his life actually "remakes" humanity; and God the Holy Spirit perfects us and rewards us by his grace. Occasionally, she simply refers to these as "kind" (nature), "mercy" and "grace":

For all our life is in three. In the first we have our being: and in the second we have our increasing: and in the third we have our fulfilling.
The first is kind: the second is mercy: the third is grace. (ch. 58, p. 159)

As we have seen, however, she is unable to separate the works of the Persons of the Trinity, even though she sees the Persons as working in different ways. Therefore, the works of "kind", "mercy", and "grace" are not to be thought of as divided. Creation, for example, is seen as a work of the whole Trinity and as a continual process in human development--even though she thinks of creation sometimes as principally the work of God the Father. The overlapping of "work" in the Trinity is seen dramatically when, as we shall see, Julian thinks of

3 Below, pp. 270 ff.

creation sometimes as principally the work of God the Father. The overlapping of "work" in the Trinity is seen dramatically when, as we shall see, she thinks of creation and incarnation as essentially the same divine act in the making and re-making of mankind.

It is important to notice that, in her terminology, "increasing" and "re-making" describe the same aspect of human development. Ordinarily we would think of "remaking" as taking place when the original product is no longer desired or is faulty. A complete break with the past is implied, because something is made over again. In the Revelations, however, this remaking of humanity is seen as a step in the continuous creation of mankind; and in no sense is the original creation to be thought of as imperfect. The most significant point to be developed here is that human nature, including our physical nature (even what is sometimes thought of as "sinful flesh") is not to be understood as basically opposed to the being of God, but as loved by him and sustained by him. Human nature is a work of God; and although the maturing of humanity involves pain and corruption (which are not works of God but which come into being through sin), God does not cease to love and to work in what he has made.

Included in her discussion of oneing as a process of growing up, as it were, into God, are themes which are familiar to us in historical Christian theology: the roles of nature, mercy and grace in atonement; the significance of Christ's suffering on the cross in overcoming sin; the concept of the "harrowing of hell" (the idea that Christ descended into hell to free those souls who were faithful to God prior to the incarnation); the significance of Christ's obedience for our own lives; the importance of the resurrection and ascension for us; and the concept of the imago dei, or capax infiniti--that man reflects God's image, in some sense, and is capable of being at one with God.

Before we explore the aspects of oneing which Julian describes in the Revelations, it will be helpful to clarify the nature of her concept as opposed to other concepts of at-one-ment with which we may already be familiar. Although her "oneing" is used with specific reference in the Revelations to a relationship which she defines, the word "atonement", sometimes referred to by Julian scholars as its equivalent, is not at all straightforward in its theological usages. "Atonement" has meant a variety of things to theologians at different times, until its meaning has come to depend primarily upon the individual who uses it. Any equivalence, therefore, between "atonement" and Julian's "oneing" must be approached cautiously.

The first thing for us to do, if we are used to reading about the theology of "atonement", is to admit that the word is no longer commonly used in conversation; it has been retained in our language primarily insofar as it refers to certain historical (and often conflicting) theologies of atonement. Some of these theologies have their roots in long-standing traditions of the Church, although the word "atonement" itself is comparatively recent. As is well known, it usually implies a type of substitutionary theology which dates from the sixteenth century, and more especially, from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in English speaking countries.

In the past, when the word "atonement" appeared in the English language outside the sphere of theology, it implied the uniting of persons who had been separated, as perhaps by an argument or a crime. It therefore meant "reconciliation", or "reuniting". The emphasis here is not upon the present situation (that of being together) but upon an attitude which brought people together (i.e., conciliation). More especially, the emphasis fell upon the deed or "act" which brought reconciliation about, usually involving repentance, repayment,

forgiveness--or a punishment in proportion to the crime which originally caused the need for "atonement". Hence the term is frequently seen in literature as the phrase, "act of atonement". In this sense it has come to mean a change in attitude, or even a complete reversal; with the special connotation of "forgiveness replacing anger", or "satisfaction under the law", for a crime.

It is difficult to say whether the ordinary use of "atonement" which we have described above, or its special theological uses, came about first. In any case, it would be generally agreed that when "atonement" appears in historical theology, it often emphasizes more unpleasant connotations of repentance and forgiveness, satisfaction and punishment, and so on. The various "theories" of atonement which have been put forward in theology to describe the relationship of man to God within the special framework of "forgiveness-reconciliation" are as different from one another as they are exclusive in their claims to be absolutely correct. In general, a "theory" of atonement is said to be a way of explaining how God has reconciled sinful man to himself in Jesus Christ. For many Protestants, atonement is virtually limited to the single event, or act, of reconciliation in the death of Jesus on the cross. Sometimes (as in the theology of Karl Barth in recent times) the act involved here necessarily includes the whole of Jesus' life. One effect of stressing the entire life of Jesus as an atoning act, however, has been to de-personalize the historical Jesus altogether, so that it has become possible to speak of the "Christ-event" instead of the person of Jesus as the reconciling act between God and man.

For Roman Catholics, the concept of atonement (whether or not it is called by that name) is likely to be broader, incorporating a process by which we are brought into reconciliation with God or even into mystical union with him.

An act of atonement, therefore, would imply something taking place in our own lives--a perfecting of our lives or, at least, a receptivity on our part--to the atoning act of God in Christ. In either case, there is an emphasis upon the means by which God is working to bring us into reconciliation with himself; and this is reflected in our terminology, as for example when we speak of the "means" of grace.

By contrast to the above, Julian's word "oneing" simply means to unite persons, or parts, until they are one or form a complete whole. The picture we should have is of drawing together; or, where people are concerned, of a loving relationship like marriage. When, in medieval English, it is said that something is "oned" or that people are "oned", nothing is immediately implied about how the oneing took place or even about the condition beforehand, except that they were apart. In other words, we need not conclude that they were once whole or together and were separated by some kind of offense (as is almost always implied by "atonement"). Julian's "oneing", therefore, may mean a union of persons or things for the first time. The emphasis here is upon the present condition (being "at one") and points to a new situation rather than, say, merely to an attitude or a specific act. Oneing is therefore both an act and a state of being:

Thus I saw our Lord Jesus languishing for a long time: for the oneing with the Godhead gave strength to the manhood to suffer... (ch. 20)

Thus there are two major differences between atonement, as we may ordinarily think of it, and Julian's idea of oneing. First, atonement usually implies a reconciliation rather than a new state of completeness or union; and second, it tends to describe the act by which reconciliation takes place (or is supposed to take place), rather than the state of reconciliation--or union--itself.

It is important to note, here, that when "atonement" is used to describe an act bringing about reconciliation between man and God, the character of man's relationship to God is often depicted entirely in terms of attitudes both on man's part and on God's. Where the importance of faith is stressed, the emphasis falls upon the attitude of forgiveness in God; and where the importance of holiness is stressed, there is a corresponding emphasis upon the attitude of repentance or receptivity in man. "Sin" itself, when it is thought of as disobedience or a wrongful act, is therefore also an attitude. The act of atonement, then is a change in attitude such that two persons are brought into a state of reconciliation.

A theory of atonement which emphasizes a change in attitude, as opposed to an emphasis upon one's situation or condition, is sometimes referred to as a "psychological" theory. As in its ordinary usage, "psychological" is meant here to indicate an emphasis upon the mind of man and even, as it were, on the mind of God. Forgiveness and its opposite, condemnation (or wrath), are two attitudes which God is said to take towards man; and the chief problem in some theologies is, therefore, to decide which attitude God has taken toward certain individuals. Faith and repentance are attitudes of man which are seen to correspond to forgiveness in God; while faithlessness or impenitence are said to result in condemnation. In this type of thinking, events (or situations) are seen to be governed by attitudes: the crucifixion, for example, is said to be "necessary" because of the attitude of wrath on God's part, or because God views sin as requiring some sort of punishment or repayment. Hence, the Son of God is said, in this sort of theology, to have absorbed the wrath of God in himself so that human beings might be forgiven. The human attitude of faith, said to be a change of mind called "conversion", is also determined by a prior attitude--the attitude

forgiveness in God. In some theologies, this can even be reversed so that one is said to be forgiven because he has "converted", i. e., has become repentant. Thus atonement is said to reflect a change in God's mind, as it were, toward man with a corresponding change in our own minds towards God.

In many strands of historical Christianity, especially among certain mystical theologians and particularly in the Orthodox tradition, there is a different approach to the question of atonement altogether; and it is this general approach which Julian takes in the Revelations. In this second approach, as we have indicated in her use of the word "oneing", the emphasis is not upon a means of reconciliation (the act of atonement or oneing) but upon the nature of the relationship between God and man, which we see in Christ (the state of oneing). She will hold that the means of oneing to God is not really something we can know at all because it refers to the divine prerogative of God (the first truth, or secret, in God). What we can know, and do know intimately, is the relationship which we have with God which we call oneing. The fact of this relationship is demonstrated in the person of Jesus Christ, who is not merely a means of oneing but who is oneing in himself.

Next, as we have suggested, Julian is not concerned with a reversal in our relationship to God, but in the maturing or completion of a relationship which already exists. We shall later speak of this maturing as a kind of healing; but the healing, rather than being a return to an old situation, is an ascent to a new one. In terms of Jesus' own person, this approach is significant. The crucifixion, for example, is not a deed which reflects a change in God's mind towards us, nor a deed in which God's mind is changed towards us, nor a deed which merely is meant to change our minds towards God. Rather, it manifests the relationship of oneing which God has to man already in his con-

sistent Love; and it affects humanity in our being (regardless of the attitude which we take towards it). For Julian, it would be wrong to speak of a change of attitude on God's part, because God does not change who he is. Thus there are significant events within the process of oneing in which God's consistent will is at work including creation, incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, transfiguration and so on. All these together describe a single relationship of oneing in which uncreated Charity becomes created charity in Jesus. The movement of God out of himself in oneing is not a change in God but a progression in man; not a reversal, but a completion. Oneing (in Julian's view) is possible only because God does not change his mind towards us in his love.

Finally, Julian is not concerned primarily with attitudes, in the sense of mental dispositions; ^{but with} the nature, or condition, of man's being in relationship to God. She is not concerned with forgiveness or repentance, for example, but with the realities which make these attitudes possible on our part. In this approach to theology, events might be thought of as governing attitudes; that is, a proper relationship with God implies realistic thinking in light of what God has already done. Faith itself becomes the recognition of reality: understanding the nature of our relationship to God in Christ, the condition of our being.

The idea that the person of Jesus Christ is significant for the being of all mankind, whether we recognize it or not, is an ontological approach to at-one-ment. The ontological nature of Julian's approach to "created charity" stems directly from her approach to the Trinity itself. She is not, as we have seen, concerned with the Love of God as a kind of disposition or attitude of God's but as the Being of God himself. Thus there can be nothing but love in God: God cannot begin to love, nor can God change his mind at all, because

God is love. For this reason, Julian will argue that, though we should know that we are forgiven (ch. 40), there is a sense in which, strictly speaking, forgiveness does not describe our relationship to God, because forgiveness implies a change from displeasure:

Wherefore we deserve pain and blame and wrath. Yet notwithstanding all this, I saw truly that our Lord was never wroth nor shall he ever be. For he is God: he is Good: he is Truth: he is Love: he is Peace. His Might, his Wisdom, his Charity and his Unity suffer him not to be wroth. For I saw truly that it is against the property of his Wisdom, and against the property of his Goodness. God is the goodness which may not be wroth; for God is naught but Goodness. Our soul is oned to him, the unchangeable Goodness; and between God and our soul is neither wrath nor forgiveness, in his sight. (ch. 46, p. 124)

This is not to say that attitudes are unimportant for Julian. She is able, for example, to speak of the experience of "conversion" (ch. 39, 40) as a key development in the Christian life. Conversion, however, will be seen as a development in our being or situation in relation to God and in ourselves, rather than simply a change of mind on our part. Once again, we should understand that, for Julian, attitudes are not to be confused with relationships of being, although attitudes can affect relationships. An image which Julian suggests throughout the Revelations to convey our relationship to God in Christ is that of a mother and child. A child's kinship to his mother has nothing to do with the child's attitude, though the child's refusal, for example, to acknowledge his mother would obviously distort the relationships in his family and damage his own childhood. Similarly, motherhood is not determined by a mother's attitude but by the act of giving birth--and this particular relationship is even stamped in the child's flesh, for our children look like ourselves. Obviously the image of mother and child must not be pressed too far in thinking about the relationship of oneing which we have to the Trinity, but it will be helpful in understanding the general approach which Julian takes in the Revelations.

We may summarize by understanding three points with regard to the ontological nature of oneing: first, it has to do with a relationship of God to man (uncreated Love becoming created for man's sake); second, it is a development of man's being in relationship to God's being; and third, it is, therefore, the progression of humanity into the being of God. Each of these takes place by the working of the whole Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit (though only the Son becomes incarnate and makes "created charity" a reality in his own flesh. Where oneing involves attitudes, it will mean disposing our will to God, bringing our attitudes into line with the reality which already exists for us--namely, our oneing to God in Jesus Christ.

Oneing as Joy

A chief characteristic of "created charity" is joy. In Julian's picture of the Trinity, we saw a relationship of mutual enjoyment: the delight of the Father, Son and Spirit in one another such that each "finds" himself only in the others. In the movement of God into humanity, Julian sees a further dimension of joy within the Trinity: the joy of creating humanity and involving human beings in the Love which is his. She is able to see even the crucifixion as a "joy" for the Trinity in view of what God is accomplishing for mankind:

In these three words, "it is a joy, a bliss and an endless likeing to me", were shewed three heavens--thus: for the joy, I understood the good pleasure of the Father: for the bliss, the worship of the Son: and for the endless liking, the Holy Ghost. The Father is pleased, the Son is worshipped, the Holy Ghost liketh. (ch. 23, p. 85)

Julian's vision of the Lord is itself a vision of joy:

After this our Lord shewed himself more glorified (if I saw aright) than I had seen him before. Wherein I was taught that our soul shall never have rest till it come into him, knowing that he is fullness of joy, homely, courteous and blissful: true life. Oftentimes our Lord said:

I it am, I it am; I it am that is highest; I it am that thou lovest;
 I it am that thou likest; I it am that thou servest; I it am that thou
 longest; I it am that thou desirest; I it am that thou meanest; I it
 am that is all; I it am that Holy Church preacheth and teacheth thee;
 I it am that shewed myself to thee here.

The number of his words passeth beyond my wits, and all my understanding
 and all my powers; and they are the highest, as I see it. For therein
 is comprehended--I cannot tell what: except that the joy that I saw in
 the shewing of them passeth all that heart can think or soul could de-
 sire. (ch. 26, p. 90)

Again, the joy of the Trinity is present in Christ:

We know in our faith--and it was also shewed in all the Revelations--
 that Christ Jesus is both God and man. In respect of his Godhead he is
 himself highest bliss and was so from without-beginning as so shall be
 without end--the self-same endless bliss, which can never be increased
 or diminished. (ch. 31)

To know him, therefore, is to know joy:

...the fullness of joy is to behold God in all things. (ch. 35)

In some editions of the Revelations, the word "bliss" is occasionally rendered
 "blessedness". It might be helpful to bear in mind that Julian's own words,
 "blesse", "blysse", and "blessydfulle" are meant to convey the highest possible
 joy--the bliss of the Trinity which is beyond our imaginations.

Thus she sees the movement of the Trinity into created order as the delight
 of the Trinity; and the oneing of man to God as the creation of joy in man, so
 that our lives reflect the joy of the Trinity. Julian sees great significance
 in human joy, something of the relationship which we have to the Trinity, that
 human beings are meant to be full of joy and are, therefore, meant to know God
 in his Love. The extent of God's love for us in this purpose is beyond our
 knowing:

Our soul is so preciously loved by him that is highest that it passeth
 beyond the knowing of all creatures. That is to say, there is no creature
 made that can know how much and how sweetly and how tenderly our Maker
 loveth us. Therefore we may, with his grace and help, stand in ghostly
 beholding with everlasting marvelling in this high, overpassing, immea-
 surable love that our Lord hath towards us, of his goodness.

And therefore we may ask of our Lover all that we will...Nor may we ever cease willing or loving, until we have him in fullness of joy. (ch. 6, p. 56)

Oneing takes place because it is God's will for us to know his love and to experience his joy. Speaking of her vision of Jesus' face, she compares it to the joy of a simple peasant conversing with his lord: she says that the peasant would exclaim:

"...In truth, this is greater joy and liking to me than if he gave me great gifts and remained himself a stranger to me." (ch. 7, p. 58)

She continues by describing the ecstatic response which one has, in the Spirit, to the ecstatic movement of God in revelation:

This example, though it was shewed bodily, was so profound that a man's heart might be so carried away that he could almost forget himself in the joy of this great homeliness. And so it cometh to pass in respect of our Lord Jesus and ourselves. For truly, it is the greatest joy that could be, as I see it, that he who is highest and mightiest, noblest and worthiest, is the lowest and meekest, homeliest and most courteous. In deed and in truth, this marvellous joy shall he shew to us all, when we see him. And this is our Lord's will, that we have belief and trust, joy and liking, comfort and great solace in so far as we may, with his grace and with his help, unto the time that we see it truly. For the perfect fullness of joy that we shall have, as I see it, is this marvellous courtesy and homeliness from our Father, who is our Maker and our Lord Jesus Christ--who is our Brother and our Saviour. (ch. 7, p. 58)

The enjoyment which man has in the Trinity, and the Trinity in man, is necessarily not of the same order as the enjoyment which exists within God. We may wish to think of the difference as like that between the love of a man and wife for one another, and the love which they together have for their children. In both cases there is a relationship of mutual delight and intimacy, but there is a difference in the order of the relationship. The analogy must not be pressed too far, but it suggests the movement of divine Love which Julian depicts as oneing. Love in marriage produces children, who are reared in love and who eventually learn to love their parents. This reflects our relationship to God,

who creates us out of Love, looks upon us in Love, surrounds us with his Love, works in us continually in his Love, and shows his Love (himself) to us, so that we might enjoy it--that is, so that we might enjoy him:

Fair and sweet is our heavenly Mother in the sight of our soul; precious and lovely are the gracious children in the sight of our heavenly Mother, with mildness and meekness and all the fair virtues that belong, in kind, to children...And I understood that there is no higher stature in this life than childhood--in the feebleness and failing of might and understanding--until the time that our gracious Mother hath brought us up to our Father's bliss. (ch. 63, p. 171)

or again,

For with this our good Lord said, most blissfully, "Lo, how I love thee." As if he had said: "My darling behold and see they Lord, thy God, that is thy Maker and thine endless joy; see thine own Brother, thy Saviour; my child, behold and see what liking and what bliss I have in thy salvation; and for love of me, rejoice with me." (ch. 24, p. 87)

and again,

Thus mightily, wisely and lovingly was my soul questioned in this vision; and I saw truly that I must needs assent with great reverence, and have joy in God. (ch. 11, p. 68)

The whole purpose of the oneing relationship is simply the sharing of joy and love; therefore it cannot be defined, in the same sense that we cannot explain why we love our children. We love them because they are our children, and we love them for themselves. Similarly, Julian suggests that we exist because God is Love, and God loves us because we are who we are. The Revelations are given to Julian, too, simply because God is Love:

"What, wouldst thou know thy Lord's meaning in this thing? Know it well. Love was his meaning. Who shewed it thee? Love. Wherefore sheweth he it thee? For love. Hold thee therein..." (ch. 86, p. 209)

Because the concept of Love which Julian depicts is like that of a family bound in a permanent relationship, her concept of joy is one of a permanent, committed joy, rather than of "enjoyment" or self-gratification. Here we may think of how a mother copes with her children's pains and distress inherent in

growing up by comforting, soothing and teaching them. We become aware of her enjoyment in her children precisely in the midst of pain and not merely in the moments of simple happiness or gratification:

The kind loving mother understandeth and knoweth the need of her child. She keepeth it full tenderly, as the kind and condition of motherhood will. And ever as it waxeth in age and in stature, she changeth her way of working, but not her love. And when it is come to a more advanced age, she suffereth it to be chastised... (ch. 60, p. 164)

And when we fall, hastily he raiseth us by the clasping of his love and the touching of his grace... But oftentimes, when our falling and our wretchedness is shewed to us, we are so sore adread, and so greatly ashamed of ourselves, that we scarcely know where to put ourselves. Yet even then our courteous Mother willeth not that we flee away: nothing could be more displeasing to him. Rather, he willeth us to behave as a child. For when it is distressed and afraid, it runneth hastily to the mother. And if it can do naught else, it cryeth to the mother for help, with all its might. (ch. 61, pp. 166-167)

The question of why pain exists at all is taken up in the Revelations and will be discussed in its proper place.⁴ For the moment, we want to be aware that for Julian, oneing remains a description of joy at work even in the place of pain, imperfection or sin--even in the places where we might expect joy, as a dimension of love, to cease to apply altogether. The work of Satan is turned to joy, as she understands it, by the Love of God:

In this our Lord shewed a part of the fiend's malice and the fullness of unright... For all that God suffereth him to do turneth to our joy, and to his shame and pain...

...At this sight I laughed full mightily--which made them laugh that were about me. And their laughter was a liking to me; and I thought "Would that all my even-Christians had seen as I saw; then would they all have laughed with me." But I saw not Christ laughing--it was the sight that he shewed me, I well know, that made me to laugh. Yet I understood that we may laugh both for comfort of ourselves and in our rejoicing in God. For the fiend is overcome. (ch. 13, pp. 69-70)

Her image of Christ, then, is of a Mother who wills to take her children's

⁴ Below, pp. 363 ff.

pains onto herself, so that they might have joy:

I, beholding all this by his grace, saw that the love which he hath to our soul was so strong in him that wilfully he chose his passion with great desire; and meekly he suffered it with great joy. The soul that beholdeth this when touched by his grace shall truly see that these pains of Christ's passion pass all other pains; and that all these other pains shall be turned into everlasting joy by the power of Christ's passion. (ch. 20, p. 81)

She sees this depicted, again, in the Tenth Revelation when she saw the wounds of Christ, particularly the wound in his side:

With a glad countenance our good Lord looked into his side, and beheld with joy. And with his sweet looking he led forth the understanding of his creature through this same wound into his side. And there, within, he shewed a fair and delightful place, large enough for all mankind that shall be saved to rest there, in peace and love...In his sweet beholding he shewed his blessed heart cloven in two; and in his sweet enjoying he shewed the blissful Godhead--as far forth as he would at that time, and strengthening the poor soul to understand, so to say, the endless love that was without beginning and is and shall be ever....As if he had said:

Behold and see that I loved thee so much (before ever I died for thee) that I would die for thee. And now I have died for thee, and have suffered as willingly as I may. And now is all my bitter pain and all my hard travail turned to my everlasting joy and bliss. (ch. 24, p. 87)

In much of the Church today, atonement conveys an essentially joyless act of reconciliation between a sinful creation and a mighty and holy (hence angry) God. God is often thought of as an ineffable Judge, the One who punishes whom he will and saves whom he will. This also describes an Anselmic view of atonement that Julian may have learned herself, although contemporary with her were popular theologians such as Richard Rolle following St. Bernard, St. Francis, and others who emphasize the love of God for creation. In any case, she views the whole process of oneing as ecstatic joy; and she is prepared to argue that whatever pain is involved leads toward that same joy. Any theology of atonement which would omit the dimension of joy (or context of joy) to picture oneing in terms of suffering, wrath, sin, evil, the cost of forgiveness, ransom, repayment, and so on--all elements of the Church's teaching at her time, and

and still widely stressed today--would be, for Julian, a distortion of the truth. For her, atonement is the invitation of humanity to a heavenly wedding banquet in which we are able to converse with our loving and victorious Lord and share in his household:

After this, our Lord said: "I thank thee for thy service, and for the travail [i.e., suffering] of thy youth." And in this my understanding was lifted up into heaven, where I saw our Lord God as a Lord in his own house--a Lord who hath called all his most dear friends to a solemn feast. Then I saw the Lord taking no seat in his own house; but I saw him royally reigning in his house, filling it all full with joy and mirth, himself, endlessly: to bring gladness and solace to his most dear friends, full homely and full courteously, with a marvellous melody of endless love in his own fair blissful countenance: for the shining countenance of the Godhead filleth all heaven full of joy and bliss. (ch. 14, p. 71)

Thus oneing is a progression of joy, as we are made in joy, live in the context of God's love and delight in us, and finally share in the joy of the Trinity, in his presence. It is noteworthy that, in contrast to most theological books today, Julian finds herself relating a theology of divine joy because of what she has understood of the Trinity; and she finds it necessary to discuss "joy" and "bliss" (and their synonyms) no fewer than fifty-five different places in the Revelations, or at least once every three pages for the entire book.

CHAPTER TWO: THE HUMAN CAPACITY FOR GOD

Substantial Oneing in Creation

Oneing begins from "before-any-time", as Julian likes to say, in the Love of God which created human beings and which gives them purpose. We were, she says, loved from before the time that we were made; and to experience this love is itself the purpose of our lives:

For I saw that God never began to love mankind; but right as mankind shall be in endless bliss, bringing to fulfillment the joy of God relative to his works; right so the same mankind hath been, in the foreknowledge of God, known and loved from without-beginning, according to his righteous plan. (ch. 53, p. 148)

It is God's Love which allows all things to exist, and which keeps all things constantly from vanishing into nothing (the vision of the hazelnut, ch. 5). The constancy of God's Love, then, is what makes it possible for human beings to be one with him. In this sense, our first oneing is in the Being of God, which cannot be altered by any circumstance:

Also our courteous Lord, in that same time, showed full sweetly and full mightily the endlessness and immutability of his love; and also the great goodness and his gracious inward keeping--that the love of him and of our souls shall never be separated unto without-end. (ch. 79, p. 199)

Thus was I learned that love is our Lord's meaning. And I saw full surely in this, and in all, that before God made us, he loved us. Which love was never slaked, nor ever shall be. And in this love he hath done all his works. And in this love our life is everlasting. In our making we had beginning: but the love wherein he made us was in him from without-beginning. In which love we have our beginning. (ch. 86, p. 209)

Because human beings are created in the image of God, to share in his Love, it is possible to say that our first oneing, furthermore, is in the nature of humanity itself: we are made in order to be one with God, "according to his righteous plan". These two bonds between man and God, in God's purpose and (therefore) in our own nature, may together be thought of as the human capacity

to be one with God, which capacity can never be altered in his Love.

This first kind of oneing is described by Julian as "substantial oneing", referring to the substance, or "stuff", of humanity. We have seen that in her day "substance" was used in a particular way to refer to the soul--in fact, to the reasoning faculty (in Hilton's theology, for example), or that part of man's being which is directed towards God.⁵ Usually, therefore, it implies only a part of man's being--in particular, that part of our being which is non-physical, and which is not concerned with the senses at all. Julian, in the Revelations, implies a much broader understanding of the "substantial soul" than this. Where she uses the more scholastic term, "kindly substance", we would speak simply of "human nature"--implying our whole self. When she speaks of "substantial oneing", we shall see that she refers to the union of ourselves to God, which union begins in our creation:

I beheld the working of all the blessed Trinity. In which beholding I saw and understood these three properties: the property of the Fatherhood, and the property of the Motherhood, and the property of the Lordship--in one God. In our Father almighty we have our keeping and our bliss, in respect of our kindly substance (which is applied to us by our creation), from without--beginning...(ch. 58, p. 159)

It is important to understand from the beginning that, for Julian, the relationship of oneing is one which is firmly established in God before we were made. It depends upon his creative Love and not merely upon our initiative towards God. Salvation, furthermore, has to do with our being before God, not merely with our attitudes or faith. It is a part of the "keeping" which we have

5 Above, p. 133. That Julian's concept of the "soul" involves more than our non-physical selves will become evident through the discussion which follows. It is interesting that she consistently refers to the soul in the feminine gender in the MSS., perhaps thinking of herself. Meantime she avoids the distinction between a masculine (superior) and feminine (inferior) aspect of the soul.

by God's Love:

All the souls that shall be saved are made rightful in heaven without end, in the sight of God, and by his own goodness. In this rightfulness we are endlessly kept and marvellously, above all creatures. (ch. 35, p. 104)

Julian stresses that God desires for us to be one with him, and brings this oneing about himself. Not only this, but our oneing to God is only part of the reconciliation of the whole world to God:

For by the same blessed might, wisdom and goodness that he made all things, unto the same, as their end, our good Lord continually leadeth them, and himself shall bring them thereto. (ch. 35, p. 103)

A striking image in the Revelations for the oneing which is ours in God's purpose is that of his "thirst" for humanity. It is taken from the Passion of Christ, in which Jesus cried out for water but was given vinegar (John 19:28). In the Eighth Revelation, Julian describes her vision of this bodily thirst (ch. 17), of which she sang each day in the Hours of the Blessed Virgin:⁶

At myddai, oure Lord ihesu
Was nailed on þe rode
Bitwixe twey þeeues hangid;
His bodi ran al on blood.

Hym þirstide for peyne;
þei ȝauen him drynke galle.
Al þis peyne he suffride,
Ffro deep to bie us alle.

Her vision of the bodily thirst of Christ is re-interpreted, in the Sixteenth Revelation, on a spiritual plane. In this vision, the "thirst" of Christ becomes his thirst, as the Son of God, to be one with humanity: to draw us into God:

I saw that God can do all that we need. These three we need: love, longing, and pity. Pity and love keep us in the time of our need. And the longing

6 Lay Folks' Prayer Book, op. cit., p. 25.

in the same love draweth us into heaven. For God thirsteth to have all-man, generally, in himself. In which thirst he hath drawn up all his holy souls that are now in bliss. And in gaining his living members, ever he draweth up and drinketh; and yet he still thirsteth and longeth.

I saw three sorts of longing in God, all directed to one end. The first is that he longeth to teach us to know him and to love him more and more, as is proper and expedient to us. The second is that he longeth to have us up into bliss, as souls are when they are taken out of pain into heaven. The third is, to fill us full of bliss; and that shall be fulfilled on the last day, to last forever. (ch. 75, pp. 191-192)

The substantial oneing which we have in God's purpose is not necessarily visible to us in ordinary life, but is known by faith. We shall see in a moment how, in Julian's view, sinful life--humanity as we usually see it--seems to refute the notion that we are made in the likeness of the Trinity; though we are, in fact, oned to God already in his purpose. For the moment we should note the importance of seeing God's perspective in creation. What matters ultimately is not how we think of human nature, but how God perceives it--that is, how he has made it and the purpose for which he preserves it:

For man beholdeth some deeds as well done, and some deeds as evil: but our Lord beholdeth them not so. For as all that hath being, in kind, is of God's making, so everything that is done is so in virtue of God's doing. It is easy to understand that the best deed is well done; and just so well done is the best deed and the highest, even so well done is the least deed; and all according to his attributes, and in the order that our Lord hath ordained it to, from without-beginning: for there is no doer but he. I saw full truly that he changeth never his purpose in any manner of thing, nor never shall, without-end. For there was nothing unknown to him in the rightness of his decrees, from without-beginning. (ch. 11, p. 67; cf. ch. 45, p. 122)

And:

It is his will that we have knowing of four things: the first is, that he is the ground, of whom we have all our life and our being; the second is, that he keepeth us mightily and mercifully during the time that we are in our sin, amongst all the enemies that come full fiercely upon us... the third is, how courteously he keepeth us, and maketh us to know that we go amiss; the fourth is how steadfastly he abideth us, and changeth not his regard. For it is his will that we be converted and oned to him in love, as he is to us. (ch. 78, p. 197)

The conclusion which she reaches is that humanity itself, our "kind" being, is so kept within God that it may be thought of as proceeding from God. God is the ground, or substance, which we think of as nature:

For his precious love never suffereth us to lose time; and all this is of the kind goodness of God, by the working of grace. God is kind in his Being. That is to say: the Goodness which is Kind, is God. He is the Ground: he is the Substance: he is the very thing called Kindness. And he is the very Father and the very Mother of kinds... (ch. 62, p. 168)

The other side of our natural or "substantial" union to God in creation, therefore, has to do with human nature itself, as it was created by God. She recalls the well-known doctrine of creation which is found in Genesis:

We know in our faith and in our belief through the teaching and the preaching of Holy Church that the blissful Trinity made man's kind to his image and likeness. (ch. 10, p. 64)

She takes this idea seriously: If man is made in the "image and likeness" of God, then human nature itself resembles the indwelling Love--the uncreated Charity--which is the Trinity. Julian does not say that every person is basically sinless; nor does she say that each of us would "naturally" do whatever God desires us to do if we only knew his will. She does assume, however, that every person--however wretched--bears in himself, in his nature as a human being, a likeness to the Trinity. This likeness to God is evident in various ways: for example, in our capacities to do things that we want to do, to know things, and to love. Referring to the first step of oneing in creation, Julian remarks that:

For the first step: I saw and understood that the high might of the Trinity is our Father, and the deep wisdom of the Trinity is our Mother, and the great Love of the Trinity is our Lord. And all these we have in kind and in our substantial making. (ch. 58, p. 159)

The ordinary capacities of doing, knowing and loving which we have "in kind" (simply by being normal human beings) reflect the Father, Son and Holy Spirit;

and they were created so, as a reflection of God, in the making of human nature itself. (We should bear in mind that where Julian refers to "might, wisdom and love" or to "truth, wisdom and love" she is referring to the Trinity according to a theological convention of her time.)

If human nature is made in reflection of the Trinity, then human beings can find fulfillment as human beings only when they reflect the internal love of the Trinity in their own lives. We are meant to love with the Love which is God: or, in other words, human nature is the "created charity" which reflects the uncreated Charity of the Trinity. To love God most profits ourselves--not because God consequently rewards us for loving him, but because in loving him we fulfill our own natures and profit ourselves:

But the goodness of God is ever whole and most near to us, without any comparison. Truly our lover desireth that the soul cleave to him with all its might; so that we are clinging, ever more and more, to his goodness. For of all things that the heart can conceive, this most pleaseth God and soonest bringeth profit. (ch. 6, p. 56)

Again, we are made to love and to be loved:

And also our good Lord shewed that it is the greatest pleasure to him that a simple soul come to him nakedly, plainly and homely. This is the kind yearning of the soul, through the touching of the Holy Ghost, as I am given to understand by this shewing:

God, of thy goodness, give me thyself; for thou art enough to me, and I can nothing ask that is less that would be full worship of thee.

And if I ask anything that is less, ever me wanteth; for in thee only have I all.

These words, through the goodness of God, are full lovesome to the soul, and full near touch the will of our Lord. For his goodness full filleth all his creatures and all his blessed works, without end. For he is the endlessness, and he made us only for himself; and he restored us by his blessed passion, and ever keepeth us in his blessed love. And all this is of his goodness. (ch. 5, p. 54)

The pleasure of God in creation is therefore that human beings (our soul) should love him in return, sharing in his own Love. This is the natural ("kind") yearning of the soul, i.e., the purpose for which a soul is made. It is important to understand that she sees even the "kind" yearning of the soul as due to the

"touching of the Holy Ghost". Hence, we do not understand her to mean that everyone "naturally" loves God--for, as we shall see, she is well aware that not everyone (and perhaps only a few people) really yearn for intimacy with God. She asserts, however, that when an individual is fulfilled--touched by the Holy Spirit--he yearns to know the Love which is God. When this happens, his nature is becoming complete; and it is for this that we are made:

After this our Lord shewed himself more glorified (if I saw aright) than I had seen him before. Wherein I was taught that our soul shall never have rest till it come unto him, knowing that he is fullness of joy, homely, courteous and blissful: true life. (ch. 26, p. 90)

And thus I understood that our soul may never have rest in anything that is beneath itself. And when it cometh above all creatures into itself, yet it cannot dwell in the beholding of itself; but all its beholding is blissfully set in God who is the Maker, dwelling therein; for in man's soul is his true dwelling...For I saw in the same shewing that if the blessed Trinity could have made man's soul any the better, any the fairer, any the nobler than it was made, he would not have been fully pleased with the making of man's soul. (ch. 68, p. 179)

But when our courteous Lord, of his special grace, sheweth himself to our soul, then we have what we desire; and we do not see, in that time, anything more to pray for. (ch. 43, p. 119)

To long for God's Love (for God himself) is to reflect the "thirst" which Julian sees in God and which was visible on the cross. The human soul begins to "thirst" for God, responding to his Love. The theme is a common one in the mystical theology of her day and is suggested, once more, by the daily office:⁷

As an hert desirip to be wellis of watris, so pou, god, my soul desirep to pee.

Mi soule pirstide to god, pat is a quyk welle: whanne schal y come, & appere before pe face of my god?

7 The Psalm is part of the Office for the Dead (*ibid.*, p. 67). The theme of "thirsting for God" will be found in many medieval works. That this "thirst" is created in the human soul by God, not merely potentially but in every instance that love for God is experienced, is also clearly stated in other mystical writings. (cf. Hilton's Scale, Book II, ch. 24):

True oneing, then, is the mutual desire of God for man, and of man for God-- which desire comes from God and is met by God's eternal Love.

We recall once more that it is the goodness, or ecstatic Love, of God which both creates and sustains all that is. Thus Julian says that "his goodness filleth all his creatures". There is a double meaning here: God's goodness (the divine Love of the Holy Spirit) is already at work in all things by the fact of their existence (i.e., God is to be found in all things "filling" them); and furthermore, human beings are psychologically, physically, and spiritually fulfilled only when they are full of God's goodness. God has created the soul "only for himself", and the soul is intended to be the resting place of God's love:

Our soul is made to be God's dwelling-place; and the dwelling of our soul is God, which i.e., who is unmade... (ch. 54, p. 150)

Because this is so, we can only understand human nature when we understand it in relationship to the Trinity; otherwise, we fail to appreciate the whole purpose and origin of mankind:

And thus I saw full surely that it is readier to us and more easy, to come to the knowing of God than to know our own soul. For our soul is so deep-grounded in God and so endlessly treasured, that we may not come to the knowing thereof until we have, first, knowing of God, who is the Maker; to whom it is oned. But notwithstanding I saw that we have, of our fullness, the desire wisely and truly to know our own soul; whereby we are learned to seek it where it is; and that is, in God. And thus, by the gracious leading of the Holy Ghost, we shall know them both in one. Whether we are stirred to know God or our own soul, both stirrings are good and true. (ch. 56, pp. 153-154)

If thou wilt wit what this desire is, soothly it is Jhesu. For He maketh this desire in thee and He giveth it thee, and He it is that desireth in thee and He it is that is desired. He is all, and He doth all, if thou might see Him. Thou dost nought, but sufferest Him work in thy soul and assent to Him with great gladness of heart... (Underhill, op. cit., p. 318)

She repeats,

God is nearer to us than our own soul. For he is the ground in whom our soul standeth; and he is the mean that keepeth the substance and sensuality together, so that they shall never part. For our soul sitteth in God in very rest; and our soul standeth in God in sure strength; and our soul is kindly rooted in God in endless love. And therefore, if we will to have knowing of our soul, and communing and dalliance therewith, it behoveth us to seek into our Lord God, in whom it is enclosed. (ch. 56, p. 154)

We learn about ourselves, then, not by self-reflection, but by looking to God, whom we meet in the teaching of the Church:⁸

Here may we see that we are all indebted to God for kind, and we are indebted to God for grace. Here may we see that we need not go very far out of our way to get to know various kinds, but merely to Holy Church, into our Mother's breast; that is to say, into our own soul, where our Lord dwelleth. And there shall we find all; now in faith and in understanding, and afterwards truly in himself, clearly, in bliss. (ch. 62, p. 169)

This passing life that we lead here, in our sensuality, is not aware of what our true self is, except by faith. When we come to know and see truly and clearly what our self is, then shall we, truly and clearly, see and know our Lord God in fullness of joy. And therefore it needs must be that the nearer we are to our bliss, the more we shall long for it: and that both by nature and by grace. We can have knowing of our self in this life by the constant help and power of our high kind. In this knowledge we can increase and grow by the furthering and the speeding of mercy and grace; but we may never fully know our self up to our last moment--when this passing life, and all manner of woe and pain, shall have an end.

8 Once more, the theme of knowing the self before knowing God (or in knowing God) is found throughout medieval spirituality. (cf. The Scale, Book II, ch. 30): "A soul that desires to attain knowledge of spiritual things must first know itself, for it cannot acquire knowledge of a higher kind until it first knows itself." (Underhill, op. cit., p. 186)

In the Revelations, as elsewhere, self-knowledge implies both a knowledge of the human capacity to be at one with God and the knowledge of sin in the soul (usually referred to as a "defacing" of the image of God.) Julian's particular point, however, is that human nature is to be discovered in God.

And therefore it properly belongeth to us, both by nature and by grace, to long and desire, with all our might, to know our self. For in this fullness of knowledge we shall truly and clearly know our God, in fullness and endless joy. (ch. 46, pp. 123-124)

The logical conclusion of this line of reasoning (or of Julian's vision of her soul "in" God) is that we are, in ourselves, reflections of the divine nature from the time that we are made:

And thus was my understanding led, of God, to see in him and to realize, to understand and to know, that our soul is a made Trinity, like to the unmade blessed Trinity, known and loved from without-beginning; and in the making, oned to the maker... (ch. 55, pp. 152-153, emphasis added)

Part of Julian's understanding of the oneing of humanity to God here echoes a notion about creation (as we see it in the Genesis story) which was widely held in her time. So far, what we have said about human "substance" can be applied to humanity in general, rather than to the "soul" as opposed to the body. However, in thinking about human-kind, or our substantial selves, Julian digresses once to reveal something she had been taught about the creation of the soul, as a separate act from the creation of Adam's flesh. She argues that the soul has the capacity to be oned to God, to be his dwelling place, because it is not made of the "dust of the earth":

Thus is man's soul made by God, and in the same moment knit to God. I understand that man's soul is made of naught; that is to say, it is made, but not from anything that is made--as when God would make man's body he took the slime of the earth, which is a material mingled and blended, out of all bodily things; thereof he made man's body. But for the making of man's soul, he would use naught at all: he simply made it. And thus is made-kind rightfully oned to the Maker, who is substantial unmade-kind: that is, God. Whence it is that there nor may be nor shall be anything at all between God and man's soul. (ch. 53, p. 149)

The idea that God made the soul out of nothing, whereas he created the body out of earth, is, of course, suggested by Genesis 2:7 ("...then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.") In medieval times, this was taken

literally: the human soul is created from the breath of God. We should be careful, however, not to misinterpret Julian's point. She refers to the soul as "made-kind", which is united to God. The argument, therefore, is not that each of us contains an element of God within us, which element might be called "soul". Nor, in context in the Revelations, is Julian arguing that things created out of "bodily things" are repugnant to God. Rather, she simply wants to establish that the soul is made substantially like God, though it is different from God. We are created charity, while God is the Charity which is uncreated. Hence Julian concludes:

Highly ought we to rejoice that God dwelleth in our soul; and much more highly ought we to rejoice that our soul dwelleth in God. Our soul is made to be God's dwelling place; and the dwelling of our soul is God, which is unmade. A high understanding it is inwardly to see and to know that our soul, that is made, dwelleth in God in substance. Of which substance, by God, we are what we are. And I saw no difference between God and our substance; but as it were all God. And yet my understanding took it that our substance is a creature in God. (ch. 54, p. 150)

At the creation of human kind, therefore, the soul is oned to God not only in the love which God has for the soul, and in the purpose for the soul (that we should dwell in God's Love); but also in its nature, as the created reflection of the uncreated Charity which is God. This is the human capacity to know God, which is to indwell him.

CHAPTER THREE: HUMAN INCAPACITY: THE CONDITION OF SIN

The Paradox of Sin: Our Double Nature

We have seen repeatedly that whatever happens, according to Julian's visions, happens by the will of God (cf. the Third Revelation, ch. 11). At the time of her "shewings", she responded with an obvious question: If it is true that everything happens according to God's Love, then what is sin? Does God will for us to sin--or is there any such thing as sin at all? Again, if it is true that our nature is to be the image of God, the Trinity, why should sin have been allowed?

After this our Lord brought to my mind the great longing that I had for him before. And I saw that nothing hindered me but sin; I beheld the same in us all in general. And it occurred to me that if sin had never been, we should all be clean and as like to our Lord as when he made us. Thus in my folly, even before this time, I often wondered why the beginning of sin was not prevented by the great foreseeing wisdom of God; for then--or so it seemed to me--all would have been well. (ch. 27, pp. 90-91)

Her questions are never fully answered, except in the affirmation that there is such a thing as sin, that it is not the will of God, that it is to be hated because it is alien to human nature itself; and that nevertheless it has been permitted by the wisdom of God. She learns in the Thirteenth Revelation that sin is a necessary part of human existence, but that nevertheless all things will be well:⁹

9 Cf. Thomas Aquinas' Summa, Part III, Q. 1, Art. 3, Reply Obj. 3:

A double capability may be remarked in human nature:--one, in respect to the order of natural power, and this is always fulfilled by God, Who apportions to each according to its natural capability;--the other in respect to the order of the Divine power, which all creatures implicitly obey;...there is no reason why human nature should not have been raised to something greater after sin. For God allows evils to happen in order to bring a greater good therefrom; hence it is written (Rom. v. 20): Where sin abounded, grace did more abound. (Summa Theologica, op. cit., vol. II, p. 2029)

But Jesus, who in this vision informed me of all that I needed, answered with this word saying: "Sin must needs be MS. "is behovabil", but all shall be well. All shall be well; and all manner thing shall be well." (ch. 27, p. 91)

This presents a logical paradox which she cannot resolve, and she pursues her questions throughout the time of her visions. Again and again her visions teach that nothing happens apart from the will of God, even though there is sin. God has made all things well; and all things are being brought to their fullness by his grace. Not even sin can alter this fact:

Mercy is a working that cometh of the goodness of God. And the working shall last as long as sin is permitted to pursue rightful souls...Though I shall do right naught but sin, my sin shall not hinder his goodness working. (ch. 35, 36, p. 104)

As for sin itself, however, Julian is never allowed to see it at all.

This is for two reasons: first, because sin, she will say, has no "substance" (in the sense that created things have "substance"), because it is not a work of God's; and second, because the nature of sin is too vile for her to comprehend, so that (out of God's mercy) she is not permitted to see it. First, in spite of her pleading, she could not see sin, leading her to conclude that it cannot be seen directly because of its nature;¹⁰

10 Julian is frequently mistaken here to say that there is no sin, or that evil does not exist, despite the fact that the larger portion of the Revelations is concerned with the question of how sin is overcome in the soul (see Hanshell, Deryck, "A Crux in the Interpretation of Dame Julian", in The Downside Review, April 1974, pp. 77-91). The Fathers in both the Greek and Latin traditions held that evil has no substance or positive being, even though it exists; cf. Athanasius, On the Incarnation, 4: "what is evil is not, but what is good is" (in Hardy, Edward, ed., Christology of the Later Fathers, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1954, p. 59). The idea is that what is evil is not supported by God; hence it tends toward non-being (God is On, Being; evil is therefore mē On, non-being). It is difficult for modern western students to grasp the concept that something might be, without having any substance or positive reality of its own.

And yet I saw not sin. For I believe it hath no manner or substance or particle of being. It cannot be known except by the pain that is caused thereby. This pain is something, if I see it aright, existing for a time... (ch. 27, p. 91)

Again, she is given to understand that sin is a non-thing, the absence of God's will. To put this another way, we would say that sin does not have a positive existence, but a negative existence--as illness is the absence of health; or, that it is a relationship to God which cannot be seen directly, because we are "in" it. It is not something we do at all:

In this time the working of creatures was not shewed, but only of our Lord God in creatures. For he is the mid-point of all things, and he doeth all; but I was sure that he doeth no sin. Hence I saw truly that sin is no-deed; for in all this sin was not shewed. (ch. 11, p. 66)

In the later vision of the Lord and the servant (the Fourteenth Revelation, ch. 51), the "falling" into sin appears as Adam falling into a ditch:

The Lord turneth upon his servant a look full of love, sweet and meek. He sendeth him into a certain place, to do his will. The servant not only goeth, but starteth out suddenly, and runneth in great haste, for love, to do his lord's will. But straightway he falleth down into a ravine, and taketh full great hurt... (ch. 51, p. 133)

Sin, then, is like a great chasm which lies in our path, and we do not see it (as the servant in the vision does not); nor was Julian able to see it in her visions.

Finally, however, she learns that it would not benefit her to see into sin anyway. She is already aware of the true source of human nature--that it mirrors the Trinity and is to be seen in the person of Christ. Furthermore, she knows that God is at work in everything that happens, for her benefit. Therefore, if she is to understand anything about the human condition of sin, it must be in light of the being of Christ--who is true human nature and who guides all things to their fulfilment:

Our Lord of his mercy sheweth us our sin and our feebleness, by the sweet gracious light of himself. For our sin is so foul and horrible that he, of his courtesy, willeth not to shew it us except by the light of his mercy. It is his will that we have knowing of four things: the first is, that he is the ground, of whom we have all our life and our being; the second is, that he keepeth us mightily and mercifully during the time that we are in our sin, amongst all the enemies that come full fiercely upon us...the third is, how courteously he keepeth us, and maketh us to know that we go amiss; the fourth is, how steadfastly he abideth us, and changeth not his regard. For it is his will that we be converted and oned to him in love, as he is to us. And thus, by his gracious knowing, we can see that our sin is profitable, without despairing...

And thus, by the sight of the less which our Lord sheweth us, the greater, which we see not, is laid waste. For he, of his courtesy, tempereth the sight to us. For it is so foul and horrible that we could not endure it as it is... (ch. 78, p. 197)

Thus, to understand that there is such a thing as sin, she is shown the nature of human life which is complete, or fulfilled: the life of Jesus. In light of his life, which is humanity as it is meant to be, she understands whatever is contrary to his life to be sin:

And all this was shewed in ghostly understanding, seeing this blessed word "I keep thee full surely." And by the great desire that I saw in our blessed Lord, that we should live in this manner, that is to say, in longing and in enjoying, as all this lesson of love sheweth, thereby I understood that all that is contrary to this is not of him, but is of enmity. And it is his will that we know it, by the sweet gracious light of his kind love. (ch. 82, pp. 204-205)

For Julian, then, fallen humanity is really "double". She understands herself in light of Christ, whom she takes to be her true nature; and she is aware of herself as opposed to Christ, in the pain of sin. She refers to these as her "inward" and "outward natures. The "inward" or higher nature is that in which she does not sin, but loves God; the "outward" one is that in which she wills to sin:

Feeling of regret and willful choice [i. e., to choose God] are two contraries both of which I had at that time; they are two parts, an outward and an inward. The outward part is our mortal flesh which is now in pain

and woe, and shall be, in this life; of which I felt much in this time. The inward part is a high and blessed life which is all in peace and love; and this is more secretly felt. It was in this part that mightily, wisely and willingly I chose Jesus to be my heaven. (ch. 19, pp. 79-80)

Human nature, in itself, is what Julian calls "fair kind". It is created good, not sinful or inadequate. Nevertheless, humanity as we see it ordinarily is not fulfilled. This is humanity in pain, suffering from its lack of completeness. The pains which we suffer (mental or physical, social or individual) are signs of the human condition of sin, particularly as we inflict pain on one another. For her, Christ suffers pain in his body in order to take on himself the condition of sin from which we suffer, and to convert our humanity (our sensual condition) into his own, the condition of communion with the Father. Thus, our nature or kind (substantial humanity) is our "higher nature"; and our condition (our sensual humanity; what we ordinarily see in one another and ourselves) is our "lower nature". Christ, in his human life and in the taking of pain into himself, has joined himself to our "lower nature" (our condition) in order to draw us into himself:

And thus was my understanding led, of God, to see in him and to realize, to understand and to know, that our soul is a made trinity, like to the unmade blessed Trinity, known and loved from without beginning; and in the making, oned to the Maker, as it is beforesaid... And because of the worshipful oneing that was thus made, of God, between the soul and the body, it must needs be that man's kind should be restored from a double death. Which restoring might never be, until the time that the second Person in the Trinity had taken the lower part of man's kind, to whom that higher part was oned. in the first making. And these two parts were in Christ--the higher and the lower; which is but one soul. (ch. 55, pp. 152-153)

In keeping with the traditional terminology in much of the Church, it is possible to describe Julian's concept of "lower nature" or "sensual" humanity

(what we are as individuals) simply as "flesh". We should be careful, however, not to think of "flesh" as meaning that the human body is somehow opposed to God. In Julian's theology, God loves the human body infinitely--so much so that he has taken it to himself, in the incarnation of the Son. Rather, "flesh" in Julian's thought would indicate our individual selves--our lives apart from Christ. In a sense, she suggests the image of sin as a kind of particularity, or breaking apart, of human nature. We exist in "parts"--a higher part and a lower, an inner and outer--which appear to be unreconciled. In Christ, however, the two parts are oned. Whereas sin is a breaking apart of the soul, then Jesus is a drawing together: in him our "parts" are oned, and we are made complete persons.

This concept is extremely important for our understanding of Julian. Periodically there has been a tendency for theologians to spiritualize the Christian faith overly --that is, to argue that the Christian is meant to rise above the limitations of his human self in order to be more "spiritual" or "holy". In practical terms, this has meant the tendency to despise creation, including ourselves, with the idea that the human body, or human nature, is fundamentally antagonistic to the nature of the soul or of God. In Christology, this has appeared as the argument that the Son of God did not wholly participate in human nature: that Christ did not truly suffer on the cross, for example, or that he suffered only in his "human nature" or body while his "divine nature" (or his mind) remained somehow impassible. The tendency to see the person of Christ as above humanity, or to make the Christian faith an essentially "spiritual" faith, has taken many different forms, each with its own emphases: historically these have included Gnosticism, Manicheanism, Platonism, Docetism, Apollinarism and Neoplatonism. Each of these theologies was, in turn, deemed heretical by the

Church; for it was held that, in scripture, the created order is seen to be loved by God in creation itself, and in the Incarnation, in which the Son of God took human nature onto himself fully, without reservation.¹¹

Julian aligns herself clearly and indisputably with Orthodoxy, as opposed to any purely "spiritual" conception of the faith, both in her understanding of the incarnation and in the general relationship which she sees between God and the human body, or created order as a whole. In one delightful passage, which is especially characteristic of Julian's original style, she attempts to challenge once for all the idea that the human body is not infinitely loved by God. Her argument is that our bodies were not only made by God, but that they function continually by his consistent love. Therefore, even our "lowest" or most private functions--including the elimination of waste--manifest the love of God:

Man goeth upright; his food is taken and hidden in his body as in a very fine purse. And in the time of his necessity the purse is opened, and then it is shut again--all in seemly fashion. That it is God that worketh this, is shewed there where it is said: "He cometh down to us, to the lowest part of our need." For he despiseth nothing of what he hath made. And he disdaineth not to serve us in the simplest offices that belong, in kind, to our body, for love of the soul that is made to his own likeness. For as the body is clad in clothes, and the flesh in skin, and the bones in flesh, and the heart in the breast; so are we, soul and body, clad and enclosed in the goodness of God. (ch. 6, p. 55: This passage does not appear in the Clifton Wolters edition of the Revelations, although it is included in the AMR critical text.)

Next, Julian sees that there is no salvation (or oneing) merely in the knowledge that we are not, by ourselves, what we ought to be. Rather, we become

11 Summaries of the early heresies and their historical evolution, with particular regard to the person of Christ, will be found in Kelly, op. cit.

what we ought to be by the continual working of Christ in ourselves, in the place where sin is. The continual working of God--his mercy--is necessary to bring us to fulness; nevertheless, the condition of sin which requires it has been permitted as part of God's economy:

For fully to know them["substantial kindhood", mercy and grace] and clearly to see them is naught else but the endless joy and bliss that we shall have in heaven; which God willeth that we begin here, in the knowing of his love. For by our reason alone we cannot profit, unless we have, equally therewith, mind and love. Nor can we be saved merely in that we have our kindly ground in God; unless we have, coming of the same ground, mercy and grace. For of these three workings, all together, we receive all our goods. Of which the first is goods of kind. For in our first making God gave us much good; and also greater goods, such as we could receive only in our spirit. But his foreseeing purpose, in his endless wisdom, will that we should be double. (ch. 56, p. 155)

To understand how she is able to say that the condition of sin is somehow part of God's economy, we might use an analogy which is strongly suggested by the language of the Revelations: that our "lower nature" is a kind of childhood which we are meant to outgrow into a fulness (or wholeness) in God. This wholeness is visible in Christ and is our capacity. Nevertheless, the growing process involves pain and even severe illness. The work of the Son, in taking humanity to himself, will be seen as a kind of guiding-to-maturity; and also, as the healing of the diseases (or pains) which have accompanied our childhood. In this sense our "higher nature" (our substantial soul) may be likened to health, while our condition in sin (our sensual soul) may be likened to illness. The parent of a sick child, in Julian's view, would not dislike the child for his illness, but would love him even more tenderly--and would see in the child the need to be restored to health, and brought to maturity. Thus she will depict Jesus as a mother who wishes to suffer in the place of her children, as we shall see; and for this purpose the Son of God unites himself firmly to humanity in its incomplete, and painful, situation:

We know in our faith and in our belief through the teaching and the preaching of Holy Church that the blissful Trinity made man's kind to his image and likeness. In the same manner, we know that when man fell so deep and so wretchedly by sin, there was no other help to restore man than through him that made man. And he that made man for love, by this same love willed to restore man to the same bliss, and even more. For right as we were made like to the Trinity in our first making, our Maker willed that we should be like to Jesus Christ our Saviour, in heaven without end, by virtue of our again-making. Then between these two makings he willed, for love and for worship of man, to make himself as like to man in this mortal life--in our foulness and in our wretchedness--as a man could be without guilt. Hence the meaning is, as is beforesaid, that it was the image and likeness of our unclean mortal flesh, wherein our fair bright blessed Lord hid his Godhead. (ch. 10, p 64)

Sin as Inhumanity

So far, then, we have thought of sin as an incompleteness in the human condition, or an absence of the humanity which is seen in Christ. This is not to imply, however, that sin in Julian's view is only a kind of childishness. Often, when sin is thought of as a mere absence (for example, the absence of goodness) there is a tendency to think that the condition of sin is innocuous or harmless in itself. We have already observed, however, that while Julian speaks of sin as a kind of "feebleness", she also refers to it in harsh terms--as something so "foul" and "horrible" that she is not even allowed to see it directly but only knows of it indirectly. Her reasoning here is quite simple. In depicting sin in terms of illness, pain, and the absence of the proper human condition, she thinks of it as whatever harms humanity: It is in-human.

In her language there is an important play on words which has carried over into our own speech and which makes her point clear. We said that "kind", in Middle English, means "nature" or "human nature". As an adjective, it simply means "human" or "natural". The word also carries its modern connotation of "loving", "gracious", "courteous" and so on. It is therefore possible to say

that to be "unkind" is to be "inhuman", or even, "unnatural". In modern English this has been preserved, as when we say that a particular action is "inhumane" or "inhuman"--that is, unnatural and unkind. Therefore although sin, for Julian, is an absence or failing in humanity, it is also positively harmful: it is inhumane:

And when we, by the mercy of God and with his help, accord ourselves to kind and to grace, we shall see truly that sin is worse, more vile and more painful than hell--there is no comparison; it is contrary to our fair kind. For as truly as sin is unclean, as truly sin is unkind. And this is a horrible thing to see for the loving soul that would be all fair and shining in the sight of God, as kind and grace teacheth. (ch. 63, p. 170)

For Julian, the supreme example of sin (or man's inhumanity) is the crucifixion, where Jesus is unjustly insulted, mocked, tortured, and murdered:

In this naked word sin our Lord brought to my mind, in a general way, all that is not good: the shameful despising and the uttermost tribulation that he bore for us in this life, his dying and all his pains: and the suffering, bodily and ghostly, of all his creatures... I beheld this, with all the pains that ever were or ever shall be. (And with all this I understood that the passion of Christ was the greatest and all-surpassing pain.) All this was shewed in a moment; and it quickly changed over to comforting. For our good Lord would not that the soul be afraid of this ugly sight. (ch. 27, p. 91)

This is the real meaning of her word "contrariness": not the innocuous contrariness of a playful child but a grave aberration, even the denial of one's own nature in Christ. It is "wrath", a madness or lashing out for the sake of destroying:

Wrath is naught else but a frowardness and a contrariness to peace and love, which cometh of failing of might, or of wisdom, or of goodness; which failing is not in God, but on our part. For we, by sin and wretchedness, have in us a wrath and a continual contrariness to peace and to love. (ch. 48, p. 127)

Here Julian attributes wrath specifically to the inability to do what one would like to do; to a lack of knowledge (or wisdom--we might think of this as the inability to "cope"), or to an inability to respond with love, or perhaps

the feeling of being unloved. It is due, then, to helplessness, or to a feeling of helplessness. In this view, sin is a human incapacity as opposed to the human capacity to be "created charity" which we see in the life of Jesus.¹² We recall that for Julian, "might", "wisdom" and "goodness" (i.e., love) reflect the being of God, the Trinity. Therefore to fail in these things is to fail to reflect the nature of God; which is to fail in our own humanity.

We should notice once more that she is using the word "wrath" in a particular way, especially with reference to the crucifixion. She has not referred to simple "anger" or provocation, but to humanity gone berserk. There is a kind of anger, of course, which might be justifiable; undoubtedly Julian knew, for example, the story of Jesus clearing the temple with a whip of cords (John 2:13 ff.) Ordinarily, however, anger is really a loss of control. She implies that this is unnatural--a kind of madness.¹³ In this sense, sin itself may be considered a kind of madness in human personality. Because God is permanently wedded to sinful humanity, however, there is no way to separate humanity as we see it from its own nature as God sees it. Human nature remains, for God, what it is, even when we do not live up to it:

Peace and love [i.e., God the Holy Spirit seen in the life of Christ] always exist and work in us, though we are not always in peace and love. (ch. 39, p. 111)

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- 12 The author is indebted to Dr. John Zizioulas, formerly at New College, Edinburgh, for the concept of sin as human "incapacity". Two different ideas may be conveyed by this term, however: one, of human incapacity owing to our nature as created beings (dependent upon God); the other, of human incapacitation owing to sin (or the tendency towards non-being), an "illness" in the human condition. The term is used primarily in the latter sense here, and is not meant to convey accurately the theology of Dr. Zizioulas.
- 13 The idea is found in the Ancrene Riwe, III, in which it is argued that "man is gentle by nature". The author quotes Horace, Epist. 1.2, to say that "Anger is a short form of madness." (Riwe, op. cit., p. 54)

One characteristic of wrath, or loss of control, is that it is a deviation from our ordinary behaviour: an individual ceases to "be himself" and begins to rage. We say that such a person has "gone out of his head". Julian possibly has this idea in mind when she speaks of sin as the opposite of the consistent Love which is the Trinity. God does not change in his being, which is indwelling love. Mankind, however, is inconsistent and fickle, and is even unaware of his own capacity to love consistently:

But how I saw and understood the working of mercy, I shall say... I understood it thus: man is changeable in this life: and through frailty and ignorance he falleth into sin. He is unmighty and unwise of himself: and also his will is overlaid whenever he is in tempest and sorrow and woe. The cause of this is blindness: he seeth not God. For if he saw God continually, he would have no mischievous feeling nor any kind of stirring or sorrowing, which minister to sin. (ch. 47, p. 126)

In one vision, she sees sin as a kind of sickness in which we are unable to function properly as human beings. This inability becomes obvious when we are under duress (what she calls "tempest and sorrow and woe", above). Throughout the Revelations, she depicts sin only in general terms, as she was shown it; but there is one exception. She specifically sees sin in terms of anxious behaviour when we experience strain. Two chief symptoms of sin, in this vision, are anxiety and our consequent inability to trust God--with the result that we dread him:

God shewed two sorts of sickness that we have: the one is impatience or sloth, in that we bear our travail and our pain heavily; the other is despair or doubtful dread, as I shall say afterwards. Sin he shewed in general (in which all special sins are comprehended); but he shewed none but these two in particular. It is these two that most exercise and trouble us, as our Lord shewed me; of which it is his will that we be amended (I mean those men and women who, for God's love, hate sin, and dispose themselves to God's will)... (ch. 73, p. 188)

The significance of this insight is tremendous. Although we might wish to argue that anxiety is really a normal human trait--since everyone experiences

it--Julian sees it as decidedly abnormal, even though everyone does in fact experience it ("these two most exercise and trouble us"). For her, it may be common and even part of ordinary human existence, especially as we are growing up, to experience self-doubt, fear and so on; but these things are immediately recognized as abnormal when they are exaggerated or carry over into adulthood such that we cannot behave as adults. In her view, sin is the condition of being unable to grow into adulthood because of our anxiety. Her observation that impatience and despair (or anxiety in general) are our chief illness is notable for our own society, in which anxiety with its accompanying behaviour patterns of suicidal despair, schizophrenia, escapism through drugs, destruction of family structures, motiveless crime, and so on is looked upon as a major social problem to be faced today.

In the parable of the Lord and the servant, still another image of sin is suggested (ch. 51). Adam is seen to fall into sin--in this case a ditch--from which he cannot rise. Julian sees that, in fact, he is crippled and unable even to see the Lord. It is worthwhile to think about the image of crippling in itself. Here, once more, sin is the human incapacity to fulfill the will of God:

The servant standeth before his lord reverently, ready to do his Lord's will. The lord turneth upon his servant a look full of love, sweet and meek. He sendeth him into a certain place, to do his will. The servant not only goeth, but starteth out suddenly, and runneth in great haste, for love, to do his lord's will. But straightway he falleth down into a ravine, and taketh full great hurt; and then he groaneth and moaneth, walleth and turneth about, but he cannot rise or help himself in any manner. In all this, the most misfortune that I saw him in was failing of comfort; for he could not turn his face to look upon his loving lord, in whom is full comfort; though he was very close to him. (ch. 51, p. 133).

In Julian's vision, there is no anger on the part of the lord as a result of the servant's fall. There is great suffering, however, on the servant's part.

This suffering is not punishment for his failure to do the lord's will but is itself what prevents the servant from doing the lord's will. It is a crippling, which the lord regards with pity.

The question of blame, in this vision, will be taken up further along, when we consider human responsibility to God.¹¹ In the meantime, we should understand the "shewing" which Julian has here: that God looks upon the human condition of sin as a crippling which needs to be healed. Mothers of crippled children, or those who have worked with the handicapped, will understand the need, in this situation, for love, patience, care and devotion beyond what might otherwise be demanded. In such a situation, it is not helpful to deny that crippling is there, or to pretend that it is not harmful. Rather, there is a desire to love and to nurse the cripple even though the deformity itself may be repugnant. The human (or humane) response to crippling mirrors the view of sin which God has as he sees us in our incapacity or sin.

Finally, we may think once more of sin, as it is described by Julian, in terms of a child who is growing up. Normal children fall ill, rebel, and fail to understand their parents' wisdom much of the time. In the context of these failings, they learn maturity. Again, as infants we are helpless, but in our inability to carry out certain tasks as children, we learn to be adults. All these traits are typical of children; yet none of them is, in itself, desirable. The situation of immaturity itself is to be overcome at every moment as we grow into adulthood. In the case of illness, the good mother does not resent the child but desires to take the illness upon herself, if it were pos-

11. Below, pp. 421 ff.

sible, to spare the child. At the same time, she disciplines the child when he requires it. For Julian, Jesus is the Mother who takes our illness upon himself to spare our sufferings, and who guides us into maturity by his consistent love.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE MERCY OF GOD

Sensual Oneing in Christ: The Movement of God Into Humanity

In the first aspect of oneing in creation, Julian attempts to establish the possibility for human at-one-ment to God, and she makes the argument that human beings are only fulfilled when they are in a loving, indwelling relationship with God. This loving relationship begins in creation, and even before that, in the eternal purpose of God to love outside of himself. The second aspect of oneing has to do, not with the capacity for humanity to be at-one with God, but with the actuality of oneing in particular human beings, even in the context of sin. In particular, it is the visible union of God to man and of man to God, in Jesus Christ: the "sensual" oneing of man to God.

Julian understands the Incarnation to involve all humanity, whether or not men acknowledge the fact, or know it. This is because she understands the Son of God to have taken upon himself human kind, in the incarnation: human nature, body and mind, physical and spiritual humanity, and even all humanity. In her "shewings", she sees Jesus to be in himself what it means to be human. Because he has united all humanity to himself, and in fact is the source (or model for) our own humanity, the Incarnation and the life of Christ are part of the creation of humanity itself. Jesus is the "remaking" of human nature, which is necessary because of sin:

...though the soul is ever like to God in kind, and like also in substance when restored by grace, it is often unlike to him in condition, because of sin on man's part. (ch. 43, p. 118)

We have said that in the Revelations there is a continual movement from Jesus to the Trinity, and back again. In this sense, the humanity of Christ is a window for Julian which opens the way for her to understand, so far as she is able, his divinity. To see the Son of God, however, is to see the whole

Trinity, and therefore the "homely" Love of God. Then, seeing the Trinity in Christ, Julian is drawn back to his humanity, and to her own relationship to God as a human being in his likeness.

While thinking about the Trinity, she is given an insight into the substantial relationship of humanity to God, i.e. that humanity mirrors the Trinity in its "substance". This is made concrete immediately, in her vision of Jesus. We shall note her description of one such vision at length, because it is a summary of her whole concept of the human relationship to God:

And then our good Lord opened my ghostly eye, and shewed me my soul in the midst of my heart. I saw the soul, so large as it were an endless world, and also as it were a blessed kingdom. And by the appointments that I saw therein, I understood that it is a worshipful city. In the midst of that city is our Lord Jesus, true God and true man, comely of person and tall of stature, the greatest bishop, most awful king, Lord of highest honour. And I saw him arrayed in majesty and honour. He sitteth in the soul, established in peace and rest. And he ruleth and maintaineth heaven and earth and all that is. The manhood with the Godhead sitteth in rest; the Godhead ruleth and maintaineth without any instrument or labour. And the soul is all occupied with the blessed Godhead which is sovereign Might, sovereign Wisdom, sovereign Goodness.

The place that Jesus taketh in our soul--he shall never remove therefrom without end. For in us is his homeliest home, and his endless dwelling. And in this he shewed the liking that he hath in the making of a creature. For well as the Father might make a creature, and well as the Son might make a creature; just so well the Holy Ghost willed that man's soul should be made. And so it was done. And therefore the blissful Trinity rejoiceth without end in the making of man's soul. For he saw from without--beginning what would please him without end. (ch. 68, pp. 178-179)

Julian's vision of Jesus living in the midst of her soul needs to be understood in two ways. One is the mystical sense, in which she really does understand Christ to be alive in her own soul. We shall explore this concept in a moment. The other way in which we should understand her vision has to do with the movement from the human capacity for communion with God, to actual indwelling in God. In ch. 68, she recapitulates the argument that the soul is

made to be the dwelling-place of God; and that God could not make the soul any better than it already is, in terms of the soul's capacity to live in the relationship of communion with God (p. 180). However, her vision of her own soul, as the potential dwelling-place of God, becomes a vision of Jesus. She sees Jesus as the center of her soul: 'Jesus is within her, and Jesus is the archetypical soul. In this sense, she recognizes that Jesus is human nature, as it was made; and whatever we understand about substantial kind (the human soul as it is meant to be) is derived from our understanding of Jesus himself. Humanity, in fact, is made for the indwelling of the Son of God:

Here may we see that we are all indebted to God for kind, and we are all indebted to God for grace. Here may we see that we need not go very far out of our way to get to know various kinds, but merely to Holy Church, into our Mother's breast; that is to say, into our own soul, where our Lord dwelleth...But let no man nor woman understand this of himself, individually; for it is not so. This fair kind, it is general; it is our precious Mother, Christ. For him was this fair kind prepared: for worship and nobility of man's making and for the joy and the bliss of man's salvation; just as he saw, understood and knew it, from without-beginning. (ch. 62, p. 169)

"Fair kind" is human nature as it is intended in creation, humanity fulfilled by God.

Once again, Julian is shown that humanity is not to be understood by looking to ourselves, but by seeing what humanity is in the person of Jesus. Humanity is first created to be his, the humanity of the Son of God:

God the blissful Trinity--which is everlasting Being, right as he is endless from without-beginning, right so it was in his endless purpose to make man's kind. Which fair kind was first prepared for his own Son, the second Person. And whenso he would, by full accord of all the Trinity, he made all of us at once. And in our making he knit and oned us to himself. By which oneing we are kept as clean and as noble as we were made. By virtue of that same precious oneing, we love our Maker and like him, praise him and thank him and endlessly rejoice in him. And this is the working which is wrought continually in every soul that shall be saved...(ch. 58, p. 158)

Our oneing to God in creation, therefore, is not merely in the purpose of God, nor in God's love for humanity, nor in the capacity for human nature to be indwelt by God; but it is bound up with the incarnation of the Son of God. We share in the humanity which is his--in which human nature, its capacity for God, is fulfilled, and becomes a human actuality.

An important feature of this argument is that creation takes place without reference to time, although we perceive it as having taken place "in" history. The creation of all humanity (the "substantial" creation of mankind) is at the same moment as the creation of each one of us (our sensual creation, i.e., our birth). Hence the creation of God's humanity--that is, the conception and birth of the incarnate Son--is the same moment as our own creation; and we are all made at the same "time". To grasp Julian's picture of creation, we may have to reverse the concept which we have already. We are accustomed to thinking of the acts of creation, Incarnation and our own birth as separated by time, and therefore as entirely independent actions on God's part. Logically, it would appear that God made humanity first; then (in some sense) came into humanity, sharing the human condition; and finally created each of us in our own time. For us to share in the miracle of the Incarnation in any sense at all, we would (it appears) have to learn about it, or in some sense span the centuries between Jesus' life and our own. For Julian, however, the process is the reverse: Humanity is created for the Son of God; we share in that humanity in our own creation; and the moment of our own creation is to be understood as the moment of the Incarnation--the same moment in which humanity itself is created. All these events take place at the same time and are, for God, a single act of divine Love.

Earlier we saw another way of understanding the unity of action in the creation of human nature. Julian says that substantial humanity is always loved in the eternal Love of the Trinity, from without-beginning; and that humanity is always intended, therefore, to be in communion with God. In particular, it is the humanity of Christ which the Trinity intends in creation. The incarnate Son is the source of our humanity, and the chief example of it:

For I saw that God never began to love mankind; but right as mankind shall be in endless bliss, bringing to fulfilment the joy of God relative to his works: right so the same mankind hath been, in the foreknowledge of God, known and loved from without-beginning, according to his righteous place. And by the endless purpose and decision of the full accord of the Trinity, the second Person was to be the ground and head of this fair human kind; of him we are all sprung, and in him we are all enclosed, to him we shall all go; finding in him our full heaven in everlasting joy; according to the foreseeing purpose of all the blessed Trinity from without-beginning. (ch. 53, p. 148)

She concludes that humanity is comprehended in the Son; when God looks upon humanity, he "sees" the life of Christ, and--as we shall see--her concept of grace is precisely that God judges humanity only in light of the person of Jesus, who is humanity in his eyes.

The identity of all humanity with Christ is vividly shown once more, in the vision of the Lord and the servant. First Julian sees the servant as representing Adam. Then she recognizes in him "all-man"; and finally, sees that he is really the person of Jesus Christ, in whose humanity all men share:

The lord that sat in solemn state, in rest and in peace, I understood that he is God. The servant that stood before him, I understood that he was shewed for Adam: that is to say, one man was shewed, in the time of his falling, to make thereby to be understood how God beholdeth every man in his falling. For in the sight of God every man is one man, and one man is every-man...

...I understood not all what this parable meant: and therefore I marvelled whence the servant came.

In the servant is comprehended the second person of the Trinity.

And in the servant is comprehended Adam: that is to say, every-man. Thus, when I say "the son", this meaneth the Godhead which is equal to the Father's; and when I say "the servant", it meaneth Christ's manhood which is the true Adam. (ch. 51, pp. 135-136; p. 139)

Thus the oneing of humanity and divinity in Christ is the fulfilment of human capacity, in one human being, who is God. It is a sensual relationship of indwelling:

For in that same time that God knit himself to our body in the maiden's womb, he took our sensual soul. In taking which, having enclosed us all in himself, he oned it to our substance. In this oneing he was perfect man; for Christ, having knit in himself every man that shall be saved, is perfect man. (ch. 57, p. 157)

So far we have seen that in Christ, substance and sensuality--the human capacity for God, and the concrete relationship of oneing with God--come together. The person of Jesus is God related to man in a particular life; thus, for Julian, we cannot understand our own capacity as human beings until we understand his life:

Thus in our Father, God almighty, we have our being. And in our Mother of mercy [*i.e.*, the Son] we have our reforming and our restoring; in whom our parts are oned, and all made perfect man; and by the enriching and giving, in grace, of the Holy Ghost, we are full filled. And our substance is in our Father, God almighty; and our substance is in our Mother, God all-wisdom; and our substance is in our Lord God the Holy Ghost, all-goodness. For our substance is whole in each Person of the Trinity, which is one God. But our sensuality is only in the second Person, Christ Jesus: in whom is the Father and the Holy Ghost. (ch. 58, p. 160)

Oneing in the Crucifixion

In Julian's visions, the most dramatic evidence of sensual oneing to God is to be seen in the crucifixion--because, as we have seen, the crucifixion is the greatest example of sin. Here, the Godhead is seen to be absolutely at-one with humanity, undergoing the worst human suffering at the hands of wrathful men. At the same time, through the experience of the crucifixion

Jesus demonstrates his absolute communion with the Father. Julian sees at once a vision of Christ as the ruler of the universe, who conquers sin by his power; and of Jesus as frail humanity in the context of sin, who suffers in every conceivable way at the hands of other men. This is possible for him because, as we have seen, the humanity of Christ is a manifestation of his Godhead: his humanity springs from the Trinity, and is created charity in reflection of the Trinity. Thus we noted that three "heavens" appeared to Julian, all of them in the manhood of Jesus (ch. 22). The first "heaven" is discovered in the suffering of Jesus on the cross; for here, Julian sees the extent of the love which God has for humanity:

And here I saw concerning the second heaven, as I beheld his blessed passion: the love that made him to suffer passeth so far above all his pain as heaven is above the earth. For the pain was a noble, precious and worshipful deed done in time, by the working of love. But the love was without beginning, is, and shall be without end. In this love he said most sweetly this word, "if I could suffer more, I would suffer more". He said not "if it were needful to suffer more", but "if I could suffer more". For even though it were needful, if he could suffer more, he would. (ch. 22, p. 84)

In her description of Christ's suffering, Julian emphasizes the complete identity which he makes with us as creatures who suffer in the condition of sin. We are not to think that the Son of God escaped suffering on the cross, by virtue of his communion with the Trinity. To the contrary, his suffering is far greater than any we might experience ourselves. In his absolute communion with humanity, the Son identifies himself with every pain ever experienced by human beings. In other words, his capacity to love all humanity at once means, reciprocally, his capacity to suffer with all human beings at once. This capacity is realized in Jesus precisely because he is at-one with God, not in spite of it. In the communion of humanity and divinity in Christ,

the whole Trinity, in fact, is involved in the crucifixion:

All the Trinity worked in the passion of Christ, ministering an abundance of power and plenty of grace to us by him. But only the Maiden's Son suffered. Whereof all the Blessed Trinity rejoiceth. (ch. 23, p. 86)

More emphatically, Julian sees human suffering extend into God:

Thus I saw our Lord Jesus languishing a long time: for the oneing with the Godhead gave strength to the manhood to suffer, for love, more than all the rest of man might suffer. I mean not only more pain than all men might suffer, but also that he suffered more pain than all men of salvation that ever were from the first beginning unto the last day could tell of or fully reckon; having regard to the worthiness of this highest worshipful King and his shameful ignominious death. For he that is highest and worthiest was most foully condemned and utterly despised. For the highest point to be seen in his passion is to consider and to know that it is God that suffered. (ch. 20, p. 80. Emphasis added)

The idea that God could suffer, and actually does suffer in the crucifixion, is one of the most important points to be developed in the Revelations, and needs to be understood carefully. In Julian's concept of "charity uncreated" we saw that she accepts the idea, common to all medieval scholastic thought, that God cannot be subject to change. She always sees the Trinity in terms of steadfast Love, which is identical to the Being of God. Nothing can alter the Being of God, who is always Love:

We know in our faith--and it was also shewed in all the Revelations--that Christ Jesus is both God and man. In respect of his Godhead he is himself highest bliss, and was so from without-beginning and so shall be without end--the self-same bliss, which can never be increased or diminished. This was plenteously seen in every shewing... (ch. 31, p. 96)

Therefore she argues that there can be no wrath in God (ch. 11, 46, etc.). Again, she says that man's sinful condition does not reflect the being of God, because man is "changeable" while God is steadfast in his purpose (ch. 47). Another example of change, signifying creatureliness and sin, would of course be pain--the thing by which sin is known.

In the vision of the Lord and servant, Julian sees that in God there is no "travail", meaning motion or work in the sense of painful labour:

The sitting of the Father betokeneth the Godhead; that is to say, it sheweth rest and peace; for in the Godhead there can be no travail.
(ch. 51, p. 141)

Having established that there is no "travail" in the Trinity, however, she unhesitatingly speaks of the "travail" undertaken by the Son of God, in the incarnation and particularly in the experience of the crucifixion. This is depicted most powerfully in the same vision of the Lord and servant, as for example in this passage:

For the Godhead starteth from the Father, into the Maiden's womb: falling down into the taking of our nature. And in this falling he took great sore. The sore that he took was our flesh; in which, from the first, he had experience of mortal pains...Nor might he sit with the Lord /i.e., God the Father/in rest and peace till he had won his peace, rightfully, with his hard travail. And by the left side is meant that the Father allowed his own Son, willingly, in the manhood, to suffer all man's pain, without sparing him.
(ch. 51, p. 142)

It is interesting to note that Julian uses the word "travail" to designate the kind of suffering which comes about from hard labour. When it is applied to humanity, in the Revelations, it has the special connotation of heavy toil, of anxiety, or of illness (for example, when Julian refers to her own sickness as the "travail" of her youth). All of these suggest the Genesis narrative of the fall of Adam and Eve. There, sin is seen to produce "travail" in the form of hard work, for Adam, and of the pain of childbirth for Eve. Julian makes the association in the parable:

I beheld, thinking what manner of labour it might be that the servant would do. And then I understood that he would do the greatest labour and the hardest travail that there is: he would be a gardener, delving and dyking and sweating, and turning the earth up and down: he would seek the depths, and water the plants in season; and in this he would continue his travail, and make sweet floods to run, and noble and plenteous fruit to spring forth. (ch. 51, p. 139)

The "servant", however, is not only Adam, who "travails" in sin, but also the incarnate Son. Here she applies the word "travail" to Jesus to mean his crucifixion; and she is unambiguous in saying that in the incarnation, "travail" becomes true for God--for in Christ, it is the Godhead (the Son) who "travails" to lift us out of sin.

What we have seen, then, is that within the Trinity there is no possibility of "change", because God is not a creature, and his bliss cannot be diminished. At the same time, God takes "travail" upon himself in the cross. Properly speaking, only the Son of God "travails" or suffers, because only the Son becomes incarnate:

All the Trinity worked in the passion of Christ, ministering an abundance of power and plenty of grace to us by him. But only the maiden's Son suffered. Whereof all the Trinity rejoiceth. (ch. 23, p. 86)

In this sense, the suffering which God (the Son) undergoes is in his manhood-- Jesus, who suffered historically on the cross. At the same time, it is God who suffered, and still suffers, because the Son has lifted our humanity into the being of God:

For in as much as our Lady sorrowed for his pains, as much suffered he sorrow for her sorrows--and more: as much more as his sweet manhood is worthier in kind. As long as he was passible, he suffered for us. And now he is uprisen and no more passible, yet still he suffereth with us, as I shall say afterwards. (ch. 20, p. 81)

This notion is familiar to us already, having seen it before in Julian's vision of the two kinds of thirst which Christ suffered on the cross: the physical thirst which he suffered as man, and a "ghostly" thirst which is his desire to see us lifted out of sin (ch. 17, 31). The Church on earth is the Son's body, which still has to be brought fully into heaven; therefore, as long as the Church lasts on earth, the Son continues to suffer "ghostly" thirst:

In respect of being our Head, Christ is glorified and impassible. But in respect of his body--in which all his members are knit--he is not yet fully glorified nor entirely impassible. The same thirst and longing that he had upon the rood-tree--that same desire, longing and thirst (if I see it aright) was in him from without-beginning, he hath the same now, and shall have, unto the time that the last soul to be saved shall have come up into bliss. For as truly as there is in God the quality of ruth and pity, thus truly there is in God the quality of thirst and longing... Thus he hath ruth and compassion on us, and he hath longing to have us. But his wisdom and love permit not the end to come, until the best time. (ch. 31, p. 97)

The suffering which Jesus undergoes on the cross is greater than any ordinary human suffering, because Jesus suffers as God (ch. 20). Through the grace of the Father and the Son, Jesus is able to suffer more human pain than we (ch. 23); in his "thirst" he suffers spiritual pain which we do not share because of our sin (ch. 31). The point which she makes here is that God is incapable of suffering insofar as nothing can change God; but that God is capable of suffering insofar as God has taken it upon himself. Thus she argues that suffering, for Jesus, is not a burden which has fallen upon him, but an experience which he has undertaken with joy because of his love for us and for the Father. She makes this point several times in describing her Ninth Revelation:

Then said our good Lord, asking: "Art thou well paid that I suffered for thee?" I said: "Yea, good Lord, by thy mercy: yea, good Lord, blessed mayest thou be." Then said Jesus, our good Lord: "If thou art paid, I am paid. It is a joy, a bliss and an endless liking to me that ever I suffered passion for thee. And if I could suffer more, I would suffer more." (ch. 22, p. 83)

The idea is so important for her that she repeats herself within chapter 22 alone, concluding:

And here saw I concerning...heaven, as I beheld his blessed passion: the love that made him to suffer passeth so far above all his pain as heaven is above the earth. For the pain was a noble, precious and worshipful deed done in time, by the working of love. But the love was without beginning, is, and shall be without end. In this love he said most sweetly

this word, "If I could suffer more, I would suffer more." For even though it were not needful, if he could suffer more, he would. (ch. 22, p. 84)

She goes on to say, even more radically, that if it had been possible for Christ to die more than once, he would have done so--this being neither necessary, from the point of view of cleansing us from sin, nor humanly possible:

If he had said that he would, for my love, make new heavens and new earths, that were of little account--he could do this every day, if he would, without any travail; but to die for my love, so often that the number surpasses a creature's reason--that is the highest offer that our Lord God could make to man's soul, as I see it. His meaning then is this:

How could it be, then, that I would not do, for thy love, all the things in my power which trouble me not to do: seeing that I would wish, for thy love, to die so often--having no regard for my hard pains. (ch. 22, p. 84)

The argument that the Son of God underwent suffering for our sakes willingly--even joyfully--should not be misunderstood. It should be clear from what we have seen so far that Julian does not understand the crucifixion in either a Docetic sense (that Christ did not truly suffer on the cross), or an Apollinarian one (that Christ did not experience human fears or temptations). The Son's willingness to suffer is significant for her precisely because of the magnitude of suffering involved: in his humiliation and "thirst" as the Son of God, and in his human pain, both in body and in spirit. She is able, for example, to speak of "dread" with respect to Christ's suffering. In the Eighth Revelation, she sees that the pain of hell is worse than the suffering which she has experienced in compassion with the suffering Christ, because the pain of hell is despair (ch. 17). This is dramatically balanced by her vision of the "lord and servant", where the Son is understood to enter hell himself--an experience which she is not allowed to see, presumably because she could not endure it; and she sees that in his "fall" the Son truly experiences the worst spiritual suffering, as a human being:

Then was my understanding led again into the first shewing--both remaining in my mind; it was as though the courteous Lord said: "Lo, my beloved servant! What harm and evil he hath endured in my service, for love of me, yea and because of his good will! Is it not right that I should reward him, considering his fear and his dread, his hurt and his maiming, and all his woe?..." (ch. 51, p. 134)

She speaks of the obedience of the Son, in undertaking to suffer for our sakes, as a continuous love or oneing with the Father, which obedience or oneing may be understood as proceeding from his divine nature. In this sense, the relationship which the Son has with the Father is never disrupted by his "fall" into the human condition; she is able to speak of two "parts" in Christ: that which suffers as man, and that which is always at one with the Father and does not despair. Yet both "parts" are really one being:

...because of the worshipful oneing that was thus made, of God, between the soul and the body, it must needs be that man's kind should be restored from a double death. Which restoring might never be, until the time that the second Person in the Trinity had taken the lower part of man's kind, to whom that higher part was oned, in the first making. And these two parts were in Christ--the higher and the lower; which is but one soul. The higher part was ever in peace with God, in full joy and bliss; the lower part, which is sensuality, suffered for the salvation of mankind. (ch. 55, p. 153)

The Son's participation in our own suffering, which pain comes from our sin, is seen by her to be a great personal cost to him. It is a price paid in his own body:

All that he doeth for us, and has done and ever shall do, was never cost nor expense to him, except when he died in our manhood. Beginning at the sweet incarnation, and lasting till the blessed uprising on Easter morrow--just so long endured the cost and the expense of the deed of our redemption. In this deed he ever rejoiceth, endlessly, as is before said. (ch. 23, p. 85)

Throughout the Revelations, she emphasizes again and again the extent of the human suffering which Jesus experienced on the cross. In chapters 10 and 16 she describes the bruising of his face, his loss of blood, the drying out of his skin in death, and so on. She even envisions the experience of sin as

a cold wind which blows around the cross--picturing dramatically the absence of life and love which is sin:

His passion was shewed to me essentially in this blessed face--wherein I saw these four colours--and particularly in his lips, which were before fresh and vivid red, pleasing to the sight. This changing colour in his dying was pitiful to see...

...For in that time that our Saviour died upon the Rood, there was a sharp dry wind--I saw it--dreadfully cold. And when all the precious blood that could flow from his blessed body was bled out, there yet remained a moisture in the sweet flesh of Christ. But the loss of blood and the pain within, and the blowing of the wind and the cold from without, met together in the sweet body of Christ; these four dried up the flesh of Christ as time went on. The pain, sharp and bitter as it was, was yet long-lasting--I saw it... (ch. 16, p. 74)

Her description of the crucifixion itself is vivid and realistic in the extreme.

This is not because she has some morbid preoccupation with the suffering of Christ--to the contrary, her Revelations is dominated by the imagery of light and transfiguration, in contrast to most medieval accounts of at-one-ment--but because she wants to emphasize the complete union of God to man in Christ. She sees the necessity for this because of a tendency in her time (as in our own) to believe that Christ was not really "human" enough to suffer pain or die.

Next she mentions a famous relic which was much discussed in her day--the so-called St. Veronica's cloth. This was a cloth, kept in Rome, on which Jesus was said to have wiped his face on the way to Calvary. A popular legend in Julian's time, which can still be seen illustrated in paintings of the fourteenth century, was that on the cloth, an image of a perfect face had miraculously appeared. In fact, however, with a realism untypical of her day, Julian suggests that the cloth bears only a few smudges or bloodstains. Thus she writes of her vision of Jesus' face:

This second shewing was so low... I was for some time in a fear, wondering whether it was a shewing or not. And then, on different occasions our Lord gave me clearer sight whereby I understood truly that it was a shewing; that it was a figure and a likeness of our unclean mortal slough, which our fair bright blessed Lord wore for our sins. With its many changes of

of colour--brown and black, its pitiful drawn look, it made me think of the holy vernicle of Rome, upon which he imprinted his own blessed face, when he was in his hard passion and going willingly to his death. Of this image many wondered how it could be so, since that he imprinted it with that blessed face which is the fairest in heaven, the flower of earth and the fruit of the maiden's womb--how could this image be so discoloured and so far from fairness? (ch. 10, p. 63)

Her answer is that, in fact, the bruising of Christ's face is an image of our own sin--our "unclean, mortal flesh". She opines that Jesus did have a fair face, nevertheless, (and once implies that she personally believes the legend about the cloth), but she recognizes that it is humanity in its lowest state which Jesus has taken to himself, which he has "worn for our sins".

For Julian, the suffering of Christ is something which he has foreseen and has willingly undergone, out of love. In his willful suffering, Jesus has "bought" us from hell--an eternal separation from God--and has brought humanity into absolute communion with the Trinity. She says that there are "manifold joys" coming from his suffering:

One is, he rejoiceth that he hath done it in deed, and shall no more suffer. Another is that he hath therewith bought us from the endless pains of hell. Another is that he hath brought us up into heaven, and hath made us to be his crown and his endless bliss. (ch. 23, pp. 86-87)

The cause of his suffering is our own wrath; nevertheless, we need not despair about this, because his response is only love:

So we have now matter for mourning, because our sin is the cause of Christ's pains; and we have, lastingly, matter for joy, because endless love made him to suffer. And therefore the creature that seeth and feeleth the working of love, by grace, hateth naught except sin. (Of all things, in my sight, love and hate are the most immeasurable contraries.) (ch. 52, pp. 145-146)

Thus the fact that human beings are responsible for the suffering of God in Christ need not terrify us; indeed, this would be the wrong response altogether. Rather, we should approach our Mother in contrition, and we will be healed by the blood which Christ has shed in his suffering. This begins

her understanding of our own participation in the crucifixion and resurrection:

But let us not be adread of this, except in an much as dread may speed us; but meekly made we our mean to our most dear Mother. And he shall all besprinkle us in his precious blood, and make our soul full soft and full mild, and heal us to full fairness in the process of time--- for thus it is most worship of him, and joy to us without end.

And of this sweet fair working he shall never cease nor stint himself until all his most dear children be born and brought forth... Thus in our true Mother Jesus our life is grounded, in the foreseeing wisdom of himself from without-beginning, with the high might of the Father and the sovereign goodness of the Holy Ghost. And in the taking of our kind he quickened us; and in his blessed dying upon the cross he bore us to endless life. And from that time, and now, he feedeth us and furthereth us, and ever shall until doomsday; right as the high sovereign kindness of Motherhood willeth, and the kindly need of childhood demeaneth. (ch. 63, p. 170)

Finally, we are reminded again that Christ's suffering is also the height of his joy, because of what it signifies for mankind. In chapter 12, Julian describes how Christ's blood is meant to "wash us clean from sin", and is more beneficial to us than pure water. It frees us from the condition of sin--not only ourselves, but souls from all time:

Behold and see the power of this precious plenty of his most dear blood. It descended down into hell, and delivered all those there that belong to the court of heaven, breaking their bonds. The precious plenty of his most dear blood floweth over all the earth, and is at hand to wash clean from sin all creatures of good will, who are, have been and shall be. The precious plenty of his most dear blood ascendeth up into heaven, in the blessed body of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is flowing in him, praying for us to the Father; and so it is and shall be, as long as we have need. And ever more it floweth in all heaven, rejoicing in the salvation of all man's kind that are there, and shall be, unto the fulfilment of the number that is wanting. (ch. 12, p. 69)

In her imagery she suggests that we should think of Jesus' blood as his life, which life is freely shared with us, and gives life to us even if we are in hell. The image of the "harrowing of hell" is powerful, because it proclaims the victory of Jesus' own life--created charity--over every kind of separation from God. Knowing this, the Lord shows Julian his willingness to suffer in our midst:

With a glad countenance our good Lord looked into his side, and beheld with joy. And with his sweet looking he led for the understanding of his creature through this same wound into his side. And there, within, he shewed a fair and delightful place, large enough for all mankind that shall be saved to rest there, in peace and in love. Therewith he brought to my mind the most dear blood and precious water which he let pour out for love. In his sweet beholding he shewed his blessed heart cloven in two; and in his sweet enjoying he shewed to my understanding, in part, the blissful Godhead--as far forth as he would at that time, and strengthening the poor soul to understand, so to say, the endless love that was without beginning, and is and shall be ever. For with this our good Lord said, most blissfully, "Lo how I love thee." As if he had said: "My darling behold and see thy Lord, thy God, that is thy Maker and thine endless joy; see thine own Brother, thy Saviour; my child, behold and see what liking and what bliss I have in thy salvation; and for love of me, rejoice with me." To still more understanding was said this blessed word, "Lo how I love thee." (ch. 24, p. 87)

It would not be enough, however, to see in Christ a relationship of God and man in human flesh, if that relationship did not have direct bearing on us experientially as individuals. Julian recognizes that our relationship to the life of Christ is far more than simply our ability to learn about it. For her, our lives are bound up with his life. Whatever is true of him, can be true of us, and by God's grace is in fact true of us already. Christ lives in our own souls, and to know ourselves, we must know him. This fact is at the heart of the Revelations, one of its most important insights:

And all the gifts that God may give to the creature, he hath given to his Son, Jesus, for us. Which gifts he, dwelling in us, hath enclosed in him, unto the time that we shall be full grown; our soul with our body, and our body with our soul--each of them taking help of the other, until we are brought up to our full stature, according to the workings of Kind. And then, in this ground of Kind, the Holy Ghost, with working of mercy, graciously breatheth into us gifts leading to endless life. (ch. 55, p. 152)

We said that in her Sixteenth Revelation, Julian saw the Son of God in her own soul (ch. 68). This was to recapitulate the revelation that the truth of our own lives is to be found in the life of Christ. We are made to have the life of Christ (it is our "nature"); and the fact that we can have it in

this life, or grow into it, is the work which Julian thinks of as mercy and grace. Therefore, she continues:

Thus I understood that the sensuality is grounded in kind, in mercy and in grace. Which ground enableth us to receive gifts that lead us to endless life. For I saw full surely that our substance is in God; and I also saw that in our sensuality God is. For in the point where our soul is made sensual, there in the same point is the city of God, ordained for him from without-beginning. Into which city he cometh, and never shall remove from it. For God is never out of the soul, in which he shall dwell blessedly without end. And this was seen in the sixteenth shewing, where it saith: "The place that Jesus taketh in the soul, he shall never remove from it." (ch. 55, p. 152)

In what follows, we shall be concerned with the oneing of ourselves to God which takes place in Christ as he makes his home in us. Here Julian makes it clear that she is not shown a unity between God and an ideal human nature, but between human lives as they are (what we sometimes think of as sinful humanity) and the Trinity. We recall once more her observation that:

...though the soul is ever like to God in kind, and like also in substance when restored by grace, it is often unlike to him in condition, because of sin on man's part. (ch. 43, p. 118)

Charity Created in the Soul

In the visual parable of the Lord and the servant, Julian sees the Lord take his seat in a desert place, which place she understands to be her own soul (ch. 51, p. 137). She does not need to explain the imagery of the "desert": it is the dryness which is our sin, in which we "thirst" for God. Because God has taken his seat there, however, she is aware that in some sense she can never fully assent to sin. If Christ is in our hearts, then even though we sin, he is drawing us to himself, and keeping us from evil:

...in each holy assent that we give to God when we experience him truly, willing to be with him with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our might, then indeed we hate and despise our evil stirrings, and all that might be an occasion of sin, ghostly or bodily. But again, when

this sweetness is hid, we fall into blindness, and so into woe and tribulation, in various ways; and then this is our comfort--that we know in our faith that by the power of Christ who is our Keeper, we assent never thereto. Rather, we strive there against, and endure, in pain and in woe. (ch. 52, p. 144)

For the lover of God, then, to sin becomes not a matter of will, but of acting against our will. If is a fierce struggle within our soul, in which Christ who dwells in us is overcoming sin. And at every moment, the "outward" nature in which we sin is being reconciled to God:

In this I saw truly that the inward part is the master and sovereign of the outward, neither censuring nor taking heed of its desire; but all the intent of the will is set endlessly to be oned to our Lord Jesus. That the outward part could draw the inward to its own assent--this was not shewed to me; but that the inward part, by grace, draweth the outward part, and both shall be oned in bliss without end by the power of Christ--this was shewed. (ch. 19, p. 80)

Because Christ dwells in the soul of the lover of God and is loved and desired there, sin is continually displaced by his Love. Whenever we cease to recognize his presence, or to desire it, or whenever we look away from his love and fear sin, we begin to sin all the more. But even then, our "outward" nature cannot overcome--because it is God's Love for us, and not merely our faith in God, by which we are healed of sin:

But now I needs must tell you in what manner I saw deadly sin in those creatures who would not die because of sin, but would live without end in the joy of God. I saw that two contraries could not be together in one place. The greatest contraries that there are, are the highest bliss and the deepest pain. The highest bliss there is, to have God in clearness of endless light... Thus was this blissful look of our Lord God shewed, in part. In which shewing I saw that sin was its greatest contrary: so far forth that as long as long as we have anything to do with sin, we shall never see clearly this blissful look of God. And the more horrible and grievous our sins are, the deeper we are, for that time, out of his blessed sight...

But in all this, I saw, in faith, that we are not dead in the sight of God, and he passeth never away from us... Thus I saw how, with regard to those blessed creatures of endless life, sin is deadly for a short time. (ch. 72, pp. 185-186)

The contrariness of sin to the indwelling Christ is, as we have seen, a source of pain. Julian understands this pain to be necessary if we are to grow in Christ; but nevertheless, it is continually healed by him:

For I saw full truly that ever as our contrariness worketh unto us, here on earth, pain, shame and sorrow: right so, and contrariwise, grace worketh unto us, in heaven, solace, worship, bliss, to overflowing; so far forth, that when we go up and receive that sweet reward which grace hath wrought, there we shall thank and bless our Lord endlessly, rejoicing that ever we suffered woe. This property of blessed love we shall know in God, which we might never have known, had not woe gone before. When I saw all this, I needs must grant that the mercy of God and the forgiveness slaketh and wasteth our wrath. (ch. 48, p. 128)

A significant insight here is that if sin is to be overcome, it is divine Love which overcomes it--not retribution, or what we might think of as divine "justice", or even our own determination. Love "slaketh" wrath even in the worst sinner who encounters it. Julian cites the fact that the greatest saints of the Church became so in spite of their great sins:

The soul that shall come to heaven is so precious to God, and the place itself is so worshipful, that the goodness of God never permitteth a soul that is come thither to sin finally. But what sinners they are that shall be so rewarded by overpassing worship is made known in Holy Church on earth, and also in heaven. For in this sight my understanding was lifted up into heaven, and God brought joyfully to my mind David, and with him others of the old law /i.e., Old Testament/ without number. And in the new law /New Testament/ he brought to my mind first Magdalen, then Peter and Paul, Thomas and Jude, St. John of Beverley, and others also, without number; how that they are known in the Church on earth with their sins--that it is to them no shame, but all is turned to their worship. (ch. 38, p. 108)

In chapters 38 and 39 of the Revelations, she argues strongly that sin is permitted by God in order to bring about our greater maturity. John of Beverley, for example, is allowed to fall for this reason:

...St John is a very great saint in his /God's/ sight, and a blissful one. At the same time he mentioned that in his youth and tender years he was God's most dear servant, most God-loving and God-fearing. And yet God permitted him to fall; but he kept him mercifully so that he did not perish nor lose any time. And afterwards God raised him to a more manifold grace; for by the contrition and the meekness that he had in his living God hath given him in heaven manifold joys, far surpassing what he would have had if he had not sinned nor fallen. (ch. 39, p. 109)

This argument has been depicted, from time to time, as "wishful thinking", and might not seem to be very sound. However, Julian is affirming that Christ has come precisely to save sinners. The milieu in which he works, indeed the location in which God has chosen to love, is sin. The action of mercy is one of raising--not only of elevating, but of raising out of a fall, such that the last joy is greater than the first:

Mercy is a working that cometh of the goodness of God. And the working shall last as long as sin is permitted to pursue rightful souls. And when sin hath no longer leave to pursue, then the working of mercy shall cease. And then shall all be brought into rightfulness and stand therein without end. By his sufferance we fall; and in his blessed love, with his high might and wisdom, we are kept; and by his mercy and grace we are raised to more manifold joy. (ch. 35, p. 104)

Mercy is a sweet gracious working, in love, mingled with plenteous pity. Mercy worketh in the keeping of us. Mercy worketh in turning all things to good in us. Mercy, for love, suffereth us to fail in a measure. In as much as we fail, in so much we fall; and in as much as we fall, in so much we die. For we must need die in as much as we fail in the sight and the awareness of God who is our life. Our failing is dreadful, our falling is shameful, our dying is sorrowful. (ch. 48, pp. 127-128)

Julian is not reticent to follow her argument to its logical conclusion, that the greater the sin, the greater the joy in healing:

God shewed that sin shall be no shame but rather worship for man. For right as for every sin, in truth, there is an answering pain, even so for every sin there is given a bliss to the same soul, by love. Right as different sins are punished by different pains, according to their grievousness, even so shall they be rewarded in heaven with different joys according as the sin has been painful and sorrowful to the soul on earth. (ch. 38, p. 108)

The inherent problems with this point of view are obvious, and were familiar to her. She therefore cautions the reader, just as we would expect, that one is not to sin more in order to experience a greater blessing:

But if now, because of all this comfort that I have mentioned, any man or woman is foolishly tempted to say or to think that if this is true, it must be good to sin in order to have a greater reward, or else to attach less weight to sinning--let them beware of this temptation. For

truly, if it come, it is false, and from the enemy. For the same true love that touches us all by his blessed strengthening, this same blessed love teacheth us to hate sin alone, for love. And I am certain by my own experience, that the more every kind soul seeth this, in the courteous love of our Lord, he is the more loth to sin; and the more is he ashamed of his sins. For if there were laid before us all the pains in hell and purgatory and earth, including death--all other pains than sin, we should choose all those pains rather than sin. Sin is so vile and so hateful that it cannot be likened to any pain that is not sin. And a kind soul hateth no pain other than sin; for all is good but sin, and nothing is evil but sin. (ch. 40, p. 112)

If it is the case that the true nature of our humanity is to be seen in God, then it would follow that the harm which we do to ourselves in sin is greater than we could calculate on our own. We should bear in mind, again, that for Julian, sin is depicted most clearly in the insults, beating and murder of Jesus on the cross. Only a madman would argue that we ought to engage in this kind of behaviour in order to be more blessed: for sin can only produce pain, in others and in ourselves, and is our "inhumanity" to others. The whole point of life, to the contrary, is to become fulfilled human beings, i.e., to reflect the Charity which indwells us:

...I saw that when we are wholly in peace and in love, we find no contrariness, no manner of hindering. Whilst the contrariness which is now in us--our Lord God, of his goodness, maketh it to be full profitable. For though contrariness is the cause of all our tribulation and all our woe, our Lord Jesus taketh these and sendeth them up to heaven; where they are made more sweet and delectable than heart may think or tongue can tell. And when we come thither we shall find them, already turned into true fairness and endless worship. God, then, is our steadfast ground, and shall be our full bliss; he shall make us unchangeable even as he is, when we shall be there. (ch. 49, p. 130)

So far Julian has seen within herself not only the capacity to become like Christ, but the fact that her capacity is being realized already within her. She is aware that the peace of God is already displacing the wrath which is her "lower nature". In her vision of the Lord and servant, she sees Christ in fallen humanity; when the Lord looks upon Adam, he sees the Son. Again,

she sees Christ living within her such that there is a kind of "inner" and "outer" truth about herself--not two Julians but one soul who is torn by illness, which is sin. Salvation is the healing or oneing of this tearing apart or incompleteness. Thus she sees the Incarnation, in which God has entered particular (sensual) humanity--the condition of sin--as a drawing-together; and this drawing-together is made complete as Christ makes his home in her own soul:

I saw that our kind is in God, wholly; in which he maketh diversities, flowing out of him, to work his will. Whomso kind keepeth, and mercy and grace restore and fulfil, of these none shall perish. For our kind which is the higher part is knit to God in the making; and God is knit to our kind which is the lower part, in taking of our flesh. And thus in Christ our two kinds are oned; for Christ is comprehended in the Trinity, in whom our higher part is grounded and rooted; and our lower part the second Person hath taken--which kind was first prepared for him...

The next good that we receive is our faith; in which our profiting beginneth. And it cometh, this high largesse, of our kind substance, into our sensual soul. (ch. 57, p. 156)

Sensual humanity itself, once again, is a creation of God, and is not to be despised: "he maketh diversities, flowing out of him..." But from the condition of separate-ness we are meant to come into communion, beginning with a communion between ourselves and our true Self:

And as regards our substance, it may rightly be called our soul. And as regards our sensuality, it may rightly be called our soul. And that is, by the oneing that it hath in God. That worshipful city that our Lord Jesus sitteth in, it is our sensuality, in which he is enclosed. And our kindly substance is enclosed in Jesus; sitting, with the blessed soul of Christ, in rest in the Godhead. And I saw full surely that it must needs be that we should be in longing and in penance, until the time that we be led deep into God, that we verily and truly know our own soul. (ch. 56, p. 154)

In her visual parable, she observes the Lord looking upon his servant with two expressions: pity, and joy. The pity, as she understands it, is for the servant's condition; but the joy is for who the servant is, in the Lord's eyes--

and reflects the love which the Lord has for him. (We may compare her vision to that of a father who is watching his son perform a difficult task, which is causing the child some pain. The Father looks on with pity, because of the pain; yet he looks on with pride and love.) Thus she sees in the face of her Lord a reflection of herself:

These are the two parts that were shewed in the twofold regard with which the Lord beheld the falling of his beloved servant. The one was shewed outward, full meekly and mildly, with great ruth and pity; the other inward, of endless love. And right thus, our Lord willeth that we accuse ourselves willingly and truthfully, seeing and knowing our falling, and all the harm that cometh thereof; seeing and realizing that we can never restore it; and therewith that we willingly and truly see and know the everlasting love which he hath for us, and his plenteous mercy. To see and know both parts together, thus graciously, is the meek accusing that our good Lord asketh of us. He himself worketh it, where it is--in the lower part of man's life. This was shewed in his outer regard... Between the one regard and the other there is no barrier, because it is all one love. This one blessed love now hath in us a double working. For in our lower part there are pains and passions, ruths and pitie, mercies and forgiveness, and other such, that are profitable. In our higher part are none of these, but all one high love and marvellous joy; in which marvellous joy, all pains are highly restored. And in this our good Lord shewed not only our excusing, but also the worshipful nobility that he shall bring us to; turning all our blame into endless worship. (ch. 52, pp. 146-147)

We see the mercy of God, therefore, as the present work of Christ in our soul:

We know in our faith that God alone took our kind, and none but he, and furthermore that Christ alone did all the great works that belong to our salvation, and none but he. And even so he alone doeth now, in the last end; that is to say, he dwelleth here in us, and ruleth us and guideth us in this life, and bringeth us to his bliss. And thus shall he do, as long as any soul is in earth, that shall come to heaven; and so far forth, that if there were no such soul in earth but one, he would be with that one, all alone, until he had brought it up to his bliss. (ch. 80, p. 201)

It is this initiative on God's part, in which he comes to make his home in us, that is his "homely loving". Julian is shown the indwelling love of Christ again and again, in different ways:

Our good Lord shewed himself to his creature in diverse manners, both in heaven and in earth. But I saw him take no place but in man's soul. He

shewed himself in earth in the sweet incarnation and his blessed passion; and in another manner he shewed himself in earth--where I saw God in a point: and in another manner he shewed himself in earth--thus as it were in pilgrimage. (That is to say, he is here with us, leading us: and shall be, until he hath brought us all to his bliss, in heaven.) He shewed himself diverse time reigning, as it is afore-said: but principally in man's soul... He hath taken there his resting-place and his worshipful city. Out of which worshipful see he shall never rise nor remove, without-end. (ch. 81, pp. 202-203)

The bond which the Trinity has formed with humanity, then, cannot be broken; and we are to learn this, and trust it:

The highest wisdom is for a creature to do according to the will and counsel of his highest sovereign Friend. This blessed Friend is Jesus; and it is his will and counsel that we hold us with him and fasten us, homely, to him evermore--in what state so ever we be. For whether we be foul or clean, we are ever one in his loving. (ch. 76, p. 194)

This bond is so strong that our own lives are absolutely incorporated in the life of Christ:

And through the great endless love that God hath to all mankind, he maketh no division, in love, between the blessed soul of Christ and the least soul that shall be saved. For it is full easy to believe and trust that the dwelling of the blessed soul of Christ is full high in the glorious Godhead. And truly, as I understood in our Lord's meaning, where the blessed soul of Christ is, there is the substance of all the souls that shall be saved by Christ. (ch. 54, p. 150. Emphasis added.)

Now it will be necessary to distinguish between Julian's understanding of human beings in general, and the actual (sensual) condition of the soul-to-be-saved, in his relationship to Christ. She has established that all human beings are oned to God by their nature, and that God is ruling from within their nature; and further, that humanity itself has been carried into the heavens in the person of Christ. However, only some human beings respond to God's guidance in their lives and are in a proper relationship to the oneing which is taking place. God's will, of course, is that we should recognize it:

For it is his liking to reign in our understanding blissfully, and to sit in our soul restfully, and to dwell in our soul endlessly; working

us all into him. In which working he willeth that we be his helpers, giving to him all our mind; learning his laws, keeping his counsels, desiring that all be done that he doeth, truly trusting in him. For verily I saw that our substance is in God. (ch. 57, p. 158)

Julian's idea is that oneing takes place within us by virtue of God's Love, his own "working". Yet we are allowed to be "helpers" or "pilgrims" (ch. 81). Responding to his love, we cease to be contrary to him. We cannot alter the fact, in any case, of Christ's presence and his absolute authority over our lives. We recall that, in Julian's vision of indwelling, Christ appears as a great king, or a feudal lord, or a bishop seated in "his wonderful see", which is our soul (ch. 81). She further likens the rulership, or leadership of Christ in the soul to that of a guide on a pilgrimage (ch. 81), which pilgrimage is, of course, life itself. For some souls, Christ is actually a guide who is followed and loved. For others, the fact that he is guide (as Julian understands it), is ignored--but the fact is not altered. Thus Julian refers to one kind of indwelling, of Christ in the soul, specifically and only in reference to the "soul-to-be-saved".

To understand Julian properly here, we should think of the word "saved" as meaning "matured" or "healed"--corresponding, as we have seen, to the concept of sin as an illness in humanity--or immaturity. Thus when Julian mentions the "soul-to-be-saved", she is not merely thinking in futuristic terms, but in terms of a healing which is already taking place. This is the soul which is being calmed, in obedience to the Lord's peace, as opposed to those souls which are aware only of contrariness and wrath. Julian's concern, at this point, is not in determining who is "saved" and who is not in any ultimate sense; but in the nature of salvation itself. To be "saved", for Julian, is to be fulfilled by fulfilling God's desire for us to love and to be loved. Those who are being

"saved" are those who are loving--those who are being fulfilled:

And in respect of our substance, he made us so noble and so rich that ever more we work his will and his worship. (Where I saw "we", it meaneth "man that shall be saved".) For truly I saw that we are whom he loveth and do what him liketh, lastingly and without stint. And of this great richness and of this high nobility, virtues, according to measure, come to our soul, what time it is knit to our body. In which knitting we are made sensual. (ch. 57, p. 156)

We noted earlier that, for Julian, what is important is how God sees us, and not how we see ourselves. In God's eyes, we always "work his will and his worship"; for Christ has always indwelt us. At the same time, she is clear that her vision pertains especially to those who love Christ and recognize him as their lord or king. The prologue to the Shorter Version of the Revelations describes the book as "comfortable and most moving words unto all who desire to be Christ's lovers"; continually through the book, she refers to those who are "his lovers" (cf. ch. 39); and the colophon to the longer version begins, "I pray almighty God that this book come only to the hands of them that will be his faithful lovers..." The introduction and colophon have been added by a scribe, but Julian herself seems to assume that whoever is reading her book is already a lover of Christ; the very act of learning more about Christ in her work indicates a measure of love, prompted by the Spirit. Therefore, she does not hesitate to say that "we" are indwelt by Christ and actually do his will by virtue of his indwelling. It is only by his rulership that we would choose to know him at all--as, for example, when Julian chose to look to Christ for her salvation rather than elsewhere (as she was tempted to do--cf. ch. 19):

The inward part is a high and a blessed life which is all in peace and in love; and this is more secretly felt. It was in this part that mightily, wisely and willingly I chose Jesus to be my heaven.

In this I saw truly that the inward part is the master and sovereign of the outward... (ch. 19, p. 80)

Julian begins, therefore, in thinking about those persons who are in a loving relationship to Christ, who constitute the Church; and in these, she understands the nature of the rest of humanity:

God is all that is good, as I see it. And God hath made all that is made; and God loveth all that he hath made. Thus he loveth the whole--all his even-christians--for God, loveth all that is. (For in mankind that shall be saved is comprehended all, that is to say, all that is made, and the Maker of all. For in man is God, and in God is all.) He that loveth thus, loveth all. I am hopeful that by the grace of God that he who beholdeth it thus shall be truly taught and mightily comforted when he needeth comfort. (I speak of them that shall be saved. For in this time God shewed me no other.) (ch. 9, p. 61)

Thus the reader can be confident that God is actually at work in his life regardless of the pain which he now suffers in sin:

In every soul that shall be saved is a godly will that never assenteth to sin and never shall. Just as there is a beastly will in the lower part, which can will nothing good, so there is a godly will in the higher part--a will so good that it can never will evil but ever willeth the good. For this cause we are those whom he loveth, and endlessly we go what pleaseth him. This our good Lord shewed in the wholeness of love in which we stand together in his sight; so that he loveth us now, whilst we are here, as well as he shall do when we are there before his blessed face. And all our travail [suffering] is for failing of love on our side. (ch. 37, p. 107)

The effect of the indwelling Christ upon our thinking is that we see our true nature in him, and we act accordingly--we begin to live as his children:

And our faith is a power that cometh from our kind substance into our sensual soul, by the Holy Ghost. In which power, all our virtues come to us; for without that, no man may receive virtues. For it is naught else but a right understanding, with true belief and sure trust, of our being: that we are in God and he in us--which we see not. And this power, with all other that God hath ordained to us coming therein, worketh in us great things. For Christ is mercifully working in us, and we are graciously disposed to him, through the gift and power of the Holy Ghost. This working maketh that we are Christ's children, and Christian in living. (ch. 54, p. 151)

In this loving relationship, we are able to love ourselves, who are in him.

When this happens, we come to hate sin, which is repugnant to humanity itself:

Here may we see that it truly belongeth to us, of kind, to hate sin. For kind is all good and fair in itself. And grace was sent out to save kind and keep kind; and destroy sin and bring again fair kind into the blessed place whence it came (that is, God), with more nobleness and worship, by the virtuous working of grace. For it i. e., nature/ shall be seen before God, by all his Holy Ones, in joy without end. (ch. 63, p. 169)

Christ Our Mother

In the aspects of oneing which we have investigated so far, Julian has emphasized that there is a permanent bond between our humanity and God; and that in our individuality (our sensual selves), Christ is living and reconciling us to himself. It would be impossible to stress this permanent, even physical bond, too highly, in her theology. The fact that we cannot be separated from God by our humanity is our only hope of a full life, and the source of our life. The Incarnation itself therefore has bearing on every human being; and she argues that it is in Christ's humanity that we actually share in the Godhead, the uncreated Charity:

And thus Christ is our way; us surely leading in his laws. And Christ, in his body, mightily beareth us up into heaven. For I saw that Christ, us all having in him--that shall be saved by him--worshipfully presenteth his father in heaven with us. Which present with full thanks his Father receiveth, and courteously giveth it unto his Son, Jesus Christ. Which gift and working is joy to the Father, bliss to the Son, and liking to the Holy Ghost. (ch. 55, p. 151)

Humanity is the gift which the Father gives to his Son; and at the same time, the gift which the Son gives to his Father--bringing us, in his flesh, permanently into the Father's presence. Again, she sees heaven in terms of the humanity of the risen and ascended Christ:

Whilst I experienced this, my understanding was lifted up into heaven; and there I saw three heavens. At this sight I greatly marvelled, and thought: "I see three heavens, and all are of the blessed manhood of Christ; no one of them is greater, no one is less; no one is higher, no one is lower: but all are equal in blessedness." (ch. 22, p. 83)

We have said that she thinks of our bond to the Trinity also in terms of the internal "leading" or indwelling of Christ in us. Now she depicts both kinds of bond--in our humanity and in the indwelling of Christ, who guides us--as the relationship of a mother to her child.

She sees Christ as our "mother", in essentially three ways: first, in the bond between humanity itself, and his; second, in his love for us and his rulership over our lives; third, in his desire to heal us in our illness, and to suffer in our place. These aspects of the mother-child relationship are familiar to us in ordinary life. First, children bear in their flesh a resemblance to their mothers, which cannot be altered whether or not the child acknowledges it. Furthermore, the fact that a child is a child--and not the parent--cannot be altered even if the child insists that he is "grown-up". And the original parent-child relationship is, finally, a fact of history: the mother remains the mother, even when a child grows up and ceases to be a child.

Next, she assumes that the role of a mother in the family is to love her children, and teach them, bringing them into adulthood. This is the leadership of Christ in the life of the soul-to-be-saved. There are some children who do not know their own mothers, or who refuse to be guided, or who simply are "contrary" even though they are loved from their birth. Julian thinks of these in terms of pain, which indicates the condition of sin. Nevertheless these children are loved as much as all the others and are permanently bonded to their mother by her love as well as by her having given birth to them.

Finally, proper mothers act as "nurse" to their children when they are ill, and desire out of love to spare the children pain, even to suffer in their place if it were possible: Jesus is the "nurse":

For he, in all this working, fulfillleth the office of a kind nurse that hath naught else to do but to attend to the well-being of her child. It is his office to save us: it is his worship to do it, and it is his will that we know it. For he willeth that we love him sweetly, and trust in him meekly and mightily. And this shewed he in those gracious words, "I keep thee full surely". (ch. 61, p. 168)

A mother will rescue her children from disaster, knowing that she can be killed or injured by doing so. In the crucifixion, Christ has performed such an act of rescue for humanity; and furthermore, has actually suffered in our place, in our illness which is sin. Julian adds that while ordinary mothers give birth to their children only to see them suffer pain and (sometimes) to watch them die later, Christ bears us to eternal life, and to a life of everlasting bliss (ch. 60).

She summarizes her concept of Jesus as Mother in chapters 57 to 65 of the Revelations, in which she describes her fourteenth "shewing" and the beginning of the fifteenth. These chapters are compact and easy to follow, and need not be outlined here. However, we should be aware that her image of Christ as Mother is not simply a single vision, but recapitulates the whole relationship, in divine love, between humanity and God which Julian develops through the Revelations. We should also be aware that in comparing the love of Christ to that of a mother, she has continued to utilize the theological method which we noted earlier, in which she begins in the Trinity and moves to the nature of man, rather than the reverse.

She does not arrive at her concept of "motherhood" in God by thinking about motherhood, and subsequently applying her idea to Christ. Rather, she concludes that motherhood as we know it reflects (in an imperfect way) the relationship which Christ has to us, in his love:

This fair lovely word Mother, it is so sweet and so kind in itself, that it cannot truly be said to any nor of any, but to him and of him who is very Mother of Life and of all. To the property of Motherhood belongeth kind love, wisdom and knowing; and it is God. For though it is true that our bodily forthbringing is but little, lowly and simple in comparison with our ghostly forthbringing [*i.e.*, spiritual rebirth]; yet it is he that doeth the first in the creatures by whom it is done. The kind loving mother understandeth and knoweth the need of her child. She keepeth it full tenderly, as the kind and condition of motherhood will. And ever as it waxeth in age and in stature, she changeth her way of working, but not her love. And when it is come to a more advanced age, she suffereth it to be chastised, for the breaking down of vices, and to make the child receive virtues and grace. This work, with all that is fair and good, our Lord doeth it, in those by whom it is done. (ch. 60, pp. 164-165)

Thus Christ is actually at work in the ordinary functions of every mother; and motherhood itself teaches us about God's love, because it reflects his love.

It is possible that Julian's image of Christ as Mother and nurse was suggested to her by a passage in one of St. Anselm's prayers, or at least by an Anselmic image which had carried over to Julian's day. In his "Prayer to St Mary", Anselm discusses the motherhood of the Virgin along with the idea that we are "brothers" to Christ--and therefore, in a sense, sons of Mary.¹⁵ Mary is often depicted by Anselm, and traditionally in the Church, as an image of the Church itself: Mary teaches us how to respond to her Son, and she is our "Mother". Further, Mary is our "advocate" and "nurse", who intercedes with her Son on our behalf. In the "Prayer to St. Paul", Anselm extends his image of "mother" to St. Paul himself, who is "nurse of the faithful" (quoting 1 Thessalonians 2:7). Finally, Anselm refers to Jesus, too, as our Mother:

And you, Jesus, are you not also a mother?
Are you not the mother who, like a hen,
gathers her chickens under her wings?
Truly, Lord, you are a mother;

15 Prayers and Meditations of St. Anselm, op. cit., pp. 123, 260ff. See also the quotation from the Ancrene Riwe, below, p. 271.

for both they who are in labour
and they who are brought forth
are accepted by you. (Prayer to St. Paul)

Julian has her own visions of Mary, in which she sees our relationship to Christ (cf. ch. 4, 7, 18, 25 and 57 of the Revelations). Like St. Anselm, she refers to Mary as our "Mother" (ch. 57) and also goes on to say that our true Mother (perhaps she is also thinking of the Church here) is Christ:

Thus our Lady is our Mother in whom we are all enclosed; and, of her, born is Christ. For she that is Mother of our Saviour is Mother of us all that are saved in our Saviour. And our Saviour is our true Mother in whom we are endlessly borne; and we shall never come out of him.

Plenteously, fully and sweetly was this shewed. And it is spoken of in the first shewing, where it is said: "We are all in him enclosed, and he is enclosed in us." And it is spoken of in the sixteenth shewing where it saith he sitteth in the soul... (ch. 57, pp. 157-158)

There is a difference in theologies, however, between Anselm and Julian. For Anselm, Christ our Saviour is our loving Brother; but he is more especially our Judge; often in his theology (cf. Cur Deus Homo) Christ appears predominantly in that role. Thus Mary becomes, for Anselm, our "advocate", responding to our needs in tenderness and pleading before her Son on our behalf.¹⁶ For Julian, on the other hand, Christ is our judge only insofar as he is our loving Mother, the source of our making and of our remaking. The theological emphasis therefore shifts entirely, from judgement, punishment and demands, to love, guidance and healing. This is one of her most significant contributions to theology.

For her, the Motherhood of Christ means his absolutely dedicated love. Therefore the crucifixion results directly from his willingness to suffer in our place--that is, where we are, and in us. The Son of God enters into the condition of sin, in which we are, in order to bring us out of it (or through

16 cf. Anselm's "Prayer to St. Mary" 2 and 3; and his "Meditation 2: A Lament for Virginity Unhappily Lost", ibid. pp. 110 ff. and 225.

it.) This concept must be approached carefully, once again, because of the tendency to think of sin in terms of "guilty acts". To understand Julian, we shall think once more of sin as a relationship to God into which we are born, in our individuality. Our sinfulness is tied to our sensual humanity, but not to our bodies in themselves. The Son of God, in her understanding, is born into the same relationship--the context of sensual humanity. In his life, however, the human capacity to be at one with God is realized: he lives without guilt (ch. 10), because in the context of sin, Jesus maintains the indwelling relationship of the Son to his Father. For him, to be a person is to be a person-in-communion; he is only himself in love. However, to be a complete human being in the context of sin brings retribution: Christ is brutally attacked and murdered (which Julian vividly describes in ch. 10 and elsewhere); for sin cannot tolerate fullness, or as she puts it, wrath is absolutely contrary to peace and goodness.

In the crucifixion itself, Christ rescues his children from their illness. For her, there is a strong sense in which Jesus defeats the power of evil--which power we cannot see or gauge--in his own person. The evidence of this is in the pain which he suffers himself, for the sign of sin (in its attack upon humanity) is pain. His suffering is the result of our Mother's love, his willingness to be in our condition, in pain.

Finally, Julian explains why she thinks of Jesus as our Mother: because each of us owes our life to our mother, who loves us most intimately in our childhood and who is responsible for bringing us to adulthood. Only the Creator can fill this office fully. Julian's theological point is that we should not think of Jesus in any other terms than as the personal divine Love of God. He is intimate love, eternal love, suffering and patient love--absolute love:

The mother's service is nearest, readiest, and surest; nearest: for it is most kind; readiest: for it is most of love; surest: for it is most of truth. This office no one might nor could ever do to the full, except he alone. We know that all our mothers bear us to pain and to dying; a strange thing, that! But our true Mother Jesus, he alone beareth us to joy and to endless living; blessed may he be! Thus he sustaineth us within him, in love and in travail unto the full time in which he willed to suffer the sharpest throes and most grievous pains that ever were, or ever shall be; and he died at the last. Yet all this might not satisfy his marvellous love. And that shewed he in these high overpassing words of love: "If I could suffer more, I would suffer more." He could no more die, but he would not cease working. (ch. 60, p. 163)

Our Soul in God: Summary

In her concept of "charity created", Julian locates human nature within the nature of God, the Trinity; and she argues that humanity itself mirrors the uncreated Charity which is God. This is to be seen specifically (sensually) in the life of Jesus, who is himself "fulfilled" humanity--human nature as it is completed in love. Jesus is human personality in absolute communion with God, and therefore, with all that God has made: for he is both God and man, a communion which recapitulates the perichoresis within the Trinity.

Just as the Love of the Trinity is ecstatic, in creating, loving and keeping, so the love of Christ is ecstatic love in his suffering, dying and rising for the sake of sinful humanity. In Julian's theology, the Son of God has entered into the situation of sin in order to bring us out of it. His life is given to us, to be our lives, and we are meant to trust him as the one who can bring us to maturity--to the peace and love which is fulfilled human life. Exactly how this is accomplished is not shown to Julian any more than the horror of sin is directly revealed to her. However, that it is so is the burden of all her revelations; and she is convinced of the absolute bond between us and God in Christ.

In what we have seen so far, her comments on human personality have been very general, and have not spelled out clearly how we should respond to her

visions--that is, to the notion that Christ lives within us, or that we have the capacity to be at one with the Trinity. One question which remains, for example, is how we can be sure that we are among the "souls-to-be-saved". She poses this question herself (ch. 35, 79) especially with reference to a friend of hers; and she is answered that she is to keep her eyes on Jesus, whom she has seen specifically, and that she is not to attempt judgement of any individual's relationship to God in him. She has seen Christ in her own soul, just as she has seen that she is sinful. Similarly, she has seen Christ identified with humanity, just as she has seen that all men will remain in the condition of sin as long as they live. What she has seen, then, is meant to be general, and the only thing that she can relate from her Revelations is that God, in Christ, has bound himself permanently to our human condition, so that we might share permanently in the Love which is his.

The third aspect of oneing refers more especially to the Holy Spirit, in fulfilling and perfecting our human nature. Human beings are made to be loved, and to love. She says that we are "fulfilled" only when we experience the Love of God and respond in kind. She thinks of the human response of love as engendered by the Holy Spirit, completing our lives until we are experientially oned to God. In the next section, we shall explore what this means for our own lives: in faith, in prayer, in our sharing in the crucifixion of Jesus (in pain) and in his transfiguration and resurrection (in joy and praise), and finally, in the secret "great deed" which the Father, through the Son, shall perform in reconciling the world to himself.

All that Julian understands to be the proper human response to God is based upon the fact of our human relationship to him, which has already been established in his Love. Therefore, we shall not think of the human response as

determining our relationship to the Trinity, but as growing out of it. Because we mirror the uncreated Charity in our own nature, we are able (by the mercy of God--the indwelling Son) to become ecstatic as God is ecstatic: to give love. Julian's third great vision of love, therefore, is of "charity given": the procession of love out of ourselves through the grace of God.

IV

CHARITY GIVEN: HUMAN RESPONSE IN THE LOVE OF GOD

The sixth comfort is that Our Lord, when He allows us to be tempted, is playing with us as a mother with her darling child. She runs away from him and hides, and leaves him on his own, and he looks around for her, calling "Mama! Mama!" and crying a little, and then she runs out to him quickly, her arms outspread, and she puts them around him, and kisses him, and wipes his eyes. In the same way Our Lord sometimes leaves us alone for a while and withdraws His grace, His comfort and consolation, so that we find no pleasure in doing things well, and our heart's saviour is gone. And yet, at that very moment Our Lord is not loving us any the less, but is doing this out of His great love for us.

--from the Ancrene Riwe, Part IV

CHAPTER ONE: THE VIRTUE OF CHARITY--
INTRODUCTION

"Charity Given": A Theology of the Spirit

We have seen, in Julian's second vision of divine Love ("charity created"), essentially two concepts of human personality. The first is the human capacity to share in the love-relationship of the Trinity--created being taking part in uncreated Being--even though the nature of this sharing, like the Being of the Trinity itself, is beyond our ability to understand. She thinks of this human capacity as our "fair kind", which is human nature as it is meant to be, made and sustained by the Love of God. In the person of Christ, she sees human nature "fulfilled": the human life in complete communion with God, and proceeding from God. Jesus is, for her, human nature--the true human being.

Second, Julian sees in light of Christ the human incapacity to be what we are created to be, which incapacity is sin. She thinks of our incapacity, or immaturity, as the human condition. For the soul-to-be-saved, our condition or incapacity is continually being transformed by the indwelling Christ, who is reconciling us to himself, our own "higher self". Although the evil which incapacitates humanity cannot be seen (because it is not a thing or a deed, but a kind of non-being), and cannot be fully appreciated by us (because it is too horrible for us to comprehend), it manifests itself to us in human suffering--particularly in anxiety and dread. Another manifestation of sin in the human conditions is wrath, or "contrariness": opposition to love, which is fundamentally an opposition to the Being of God, and therefore to our own nature. The greatest evidence of sin, for her, is the crucifixion of Jesus, in which the wrath of sinful men inflicted itself as far as possible onto the true human being, the Son of God.

In her vision of "charity given", she sees the two dimensions of human personality--our nature (or capacity) and our condition (or incapacity)--held in tension, which tension constitutes our earthly life. For the lover of Christ, life is a process of maturing, or "oneing", through the experience of this tension. Although we sin, we grow continually into our true Self, who is Jesus. This "growing" is also a "healing", in which we become wholly ourselves: it is our salvation. Salvation is therefore a living process, in which we are always maturing into the likeness of Christ. Sin would alter our growth into another likeness, in opposition to Christ. There is no aspect of life, however, which is merely neutral or static: for life itself is a "pilgrimage" in which Christ is the guide, and source of life (ch. 81). Again, Christ is our divine Mother, which fact we cannot change; therefore we are meant to relate to him as loving children, trusting in his love:

Fair and sweet is our heavenly Mother in the sight of our soul; precious and lovely are the gracious children in the sight of our heavenly Mother, with mildness and meekness and all the fair virtues that belong, in kind, to children. For kindly the children despair not of the mother's love, kindly the child presumeth not of itself, kindly the child loveth the mother and each one of them the other. These are the fair virtues (with all others that are like to them) wherewith our heavenly Mother is served and pleased. And I understood that there is no higher stature in this life than childhood--in the feebleness and failing of might and understanding--until the time that our gracious Mother hath brought us up to our Father's bliss. (ch. 64, p. 171).

Julian's third dimension of divine Love, "charity given", depicts the fulfillment of human life as the expression of divine Love in human beings. In our analysis of "charity created", we saw her concept of theosis, or "fulfilling", developed in theoretical terms: that man can become "God-ified", as it were, and can share as a creature in the Trinity. In her theology of "charity given", the possibility of theosis is explored further, but in concrete, rather than purely theoretical, terms. She depicts the process of theosis in terms

of experiences common to all Christians: in prayer, in pain and pleasure, in sorrow and joy, dread and praise. The practical out-working of theosis in our lives is, for Julian, a gift of divine Love to us, which creates in us a loving response to God and to our fellow man. Thus she speaks of her third dimension of divine Love as the activity, or "virtue", of loving: the gift of charity, first in the ecstatic Love of God, and then in the ecstatic response of man, as he is "oned" to God in love. Once more we recall that the whole of her sixteen Revelations depicts a movement of divine Love, from the Love which is within God to the same Love as it is expressed in human beings:

I had three manners of understanding in this light of charity. The first is charity unmade: the second is charity made: the third is charity given. Charity unmade is God: charity made is our soul in God: charity given is the virtue. And that is a gracious gift, in the working of which we love God for himself and ourselves in God and all that God loveth, for God. (ch. 84, p. 207).

While Julian sees the creation of human nature as primarily the work of God the Father, and the entrance of divine Love into humanity as the province of the Son, the expression of divine Love in humanity is primarily the work of God the Holy Spirit. She refers to the work of the Spirit as the "fulfilling" or "perfecting" of our nature, which is the work of "grace":

For all our life is in three. In the first we have our being: and in the second we have our increasing: and in the third we have our fulfilling. The first is kind: the second is mercy: the third is grace. (ch. 58, p. 159).

Nevertheless, the work of the Spirit cannot be separated from the work of the Father and of the Son, even though it is a unique work. The work of "grace" is the manifestation of Christ in our lives, and therefore the expression of our Mother's love. She depicts the work of our Mother as conception, giving birth, and rearing--corresponding to creation, incarnation and the process of salvation:

I understood three types of beholding of Motherhood in God. The first is the ground of making of our kind. The second is the taking of our kind--and there beginneth the Motherhood of grace. The third is Motherhood in working. And therein is a forth-spreading, by the same grace, of a length and breadth, of a height and a deepness without end. And all is one love. (ch. 59, p. 162).

Thus nature, mercy and grace work together, as the expressions of the Father, Son, and Spirit in our lives. In "nature" our capacity for God is established; in "mercy" this capacity is made an actuality, in the person of Christ; by "grace" it becomes true of ourselves. We shall see that, for Julian, nature itself turns us towards God (for example, in the needs of our bodies, or in fear). In "mercy" God comes to meet humanity as a human being; and in "grace" we are enabled to respond to God. Thus Julian says that:

I had, in part, touching i.e., an insight: and it is grounded in kind. That is to say, our reason is grounded in God, who is substantial kindhood. Of this substantial kindhood, mercy and grace spring, and spread into us: working all things in fulfilling of our joy. These are the ground, in which we have our being, our increase and our fulfilling. For in kind we have our life and our being; and in mercy and grace we have our increase and our fulfilling. Here are three properties in one goodness; and wherever one worketh, all work, in the things which now belong to us. (ch. 56, p. 155).

Julian refers to "perfecting" and "completing" by the Holy Spirit both as a continuous process in this life, and as the whole object of this life. We live in order to be "complete", but in this life we are never completed. Completion, or fulfilment, is only to be found in the internal Love of God, which is a continuous perichoresis within the Trinity. Thus fulfilment is a movement of love, a "giving", rather than a state of being, or stationary goal in life:

And then shall the bliss of our Motherhood in Christ be begun anew in the joys of our Father, God. Which new beginning shall last without end. This new beginning I understood thus: that all his blessed children, who are come out of him by kind, should be brought again into him by grace. (ch. 64, p. 171).

Throughout the Revelations the condition of "grace", which is continuous ecstasis in God's love, is identified with the "bliss" and "joy" of God. As we have already seen, the purpose of Christ's passion is to bring us into the relationship of divine joy, which is to delight continually in God:

Behold and see that I loved thee so much (before ever I died for thee) that I would die for thee. And now I have died for thee, and have suffered as willingly as I may. And now is all my bitter pain and all my hard travail turned to my everlasting joy and bliss. And as to thee, how should it now be that thou shouldst anything pray me that pleaseth me, and that I should not full gladly grant it thee? For my pleasure is in thy holiness and thine endless joy and bliss with me. (ch. 24, p. 87).

Again, the work of the Spirit is to draw us to God, in Christ. The Spirit manifests Christ to us, so that we experience his joy:

Then our courteous Lord sheweth himself to the soul cheerfully, with glad countenance, with a friendly welcome, as though the soul had been in pain and in prison, and speaketh so:

My dear darling, I am glad thou art come to me; in all thy woe I have ever been with thee. And now thou seest me in my love, and we are oned in bliss.

Thus are sins forgiven by grace and mercy, and our soul worshipfully received in joy (just as it shall be when it comes to heaven), as often as we experience the grace-giving working of the Holy Ghost and the power of Christ's passion. (ch. 40, p. 112).

The Theme of Transfiguration in the Revelations

The image which underlies Julian's concept of "charity given" is the transfiguration of Christ. The Gospel of Mark 9:1-8 (and parallels in Matthew and Luke) describes an incident in which Jesus led three of the disciples onto a high mountain. There Jesus' appearance was altered, such that he became intensely bright, and even his clothing "became glistening, intensely white, as no fuller on earth could bleach them" (Mark 9:3, RSV). In the Revelations, Julian gives three accounts of her own visions of the transfiguration, in which Jesus' appearance seemed to her to be altered and glorified.

At the close of her description of the Eighteenth Revelation (ch. 21),

she tells how she watched Jesus dying on the cross, fully expecting to see his soul leave his body.¹ At this point she had already seen the colour of his face change from its natural brown to a hideous blue-black, the result of continuous bruising. The blood had left the skin, and the skin was drying out-- suggesting that Christ might even be dead already. But instead of seeing his final moment, with the departure of the soul from his body, she is startled to see his countenance change:

I looked for the going forth of the soul with all my might, and thought to have seen his body wholly dead. But I saw him not so. For just at the time that it seemed to me his life could no longer last, and that the shewing of his end must needs be nigh, suddenly (I still beheld the cross) his blessed face changed. (ch. 21, p. 82).

The exact nature of this sudden change in Jesus' appearance is not here described by her, except in terms of the effect which it had on her. The implication of the passage, however, is that Jesus' appearance changed from that of pain and dying, to one of joy and life. This change had a profound effect on Julian's own disposition, or appearance; and she took this to mean that she was in some sense participating in both the crucifixion and the transfiguration of Christ:

This change in him changed me, and I was as glad and merry as it is possible to be. Then our Lord brought to my mind these joyful words: "Where now is any trace of thy pain or of thy anguish?" And I was full of joy. I understood that in this life, as our Lord sees it, we are on his cross, dying with him in our pains and our passion. Then suddenly his countenance shall be changed upon us, and we shall be with him in heaven. Between this disposition and the other there shall be no break in time--and then we shall all be brought into joy...And we shall be full of bliss. (ch. 21, cont'd)

1 Compare ch. 64 (p. 173), where Julian has a vision of the soul departing the body as a little child. However, Julian's vision is of a new body rather than a body-less soul. (See below, p.407).

In this passage, then, she sees a transfiguration from pain and death, to joy (or bliss) and life. She participates in the transfiguration at the moment that she sees it; and she speaks of it in the same terms (emphasizing our coming to joy in Christ) that she uses elsewhere, to describe the "fulfilling" of the Holy Spirit.

The theme of transfiguration from death into life (or from sin into glory) is found again in the Twelfth Revelation (ch. 26). This chapter is only two paragraphs long, so that its importance is easily overlooked. It serves, however, to emphasize the dramatic change from the pain of the crucifixion which Julian had seen before, in the face of Christ, to the new joy and bliss which she now observed. Julian says that the glory which she witnessed earlier grew in intensity, once again suggesting the nature of our fulfilment in Christ:

After this our Lord shewed himself more glorified (if I saw aright) than I had seen him before. Wherein I was taught that our soul shall never have rest till it come into him, knowing that he is fullness of joy, homely, courteous and blissful: true life. Oftentimes our Lord said:

I it am, I it am; I it am that is highest; I it am that thou lovest; I it am that thou likest; I it am that thou servest; I it am that thou longest; I it am that thou desirest; I it am that thou meanest; I it am that is all; I it am that Holy Church preacheth and teacheth thee; I it am that shewed myself to thee here. (ch. 26, p. 90).

As before, her vision defies description except in terms of her own appropriation of its meaning, which she sees as a work of the Holy Spirit:

The number of his words passeth beyond my wits, and all my understanding, and all my powers; and they are the highest, as I see it. For therein is comprehended--I cannot tell what: except that the joy that I saw in the shewing of them passeth all that heart can think or soul could desire. Therefore these words are written here only that every man may receive them in our Lord's meaning, according to the grace of understanding and loving that God giveth him. (ch. 26, cont'd).

In these two accounts she describes a vision of the transfiguration in which her own disposition was changed. She sees the change in Jesus' face from pain into glory, and learns in this experience that we also participate in his pain and in his glory. In the first vision, she is unconsciously caught up into Jesus' experience; in the second, she sees that Jesus is the sole object of her faith, and even of her life as a whole. Then, for the third time, she sees the transfiguration of Christ, this time to see that Jesus is, in fact, her life before God.

The third vision of the transfiguration is the central element in Julian's most complex, and most important, "shewing": the visual parable of the Lord and the servant, in the Fourteenth Revelation (ch. 51). We recall that she saw a servant clad in a threadbare and sweat-stained "kirtle" (a peasant's smock), standing before a great Lord.² In contrast to the ragged appearance of the servant, the Lord was clothed in a shining blue robe, which she took to be the sky. Then the servant ran an errand for the Lord, and in so doing fell into a ditch. He lay there helpless, until he was restored to wholeness by the Lord. Finally, the servant was seated at the Lord's right hand. There he was transfigured: quite suddenly, the servant was clothed in a new garment,

2 In the first instance, Julian's parable depicts a feudal lord, or great knight, seated in splendour. The servant is a peasant-worker who ordinarily would have had no converse with a lord, except to receive orders, to pay dues, or perhaps to be disciplined. In Julian's Norwich, relationships between labourers and lords were strained, reflected partly in the Peasant's Revolt of 1381. (cf. Oman, *op. cit.*; pp. 1-15).

Julian several times speaks of Jesus in terms of a great lord who addresses himself to a "poor servant" (cf. Ch. 7 of the *Revelations*). For the medieval theme of Christ as the Knight or Lord, see the contemporary *Piers Ploughman* Book XIX (Goodridge, *op. cit.*, p. 310); and the *Ancrene Riwe*, part VII (*Riwe*, pp. 172-173).

even more beautiful than the Lord's, sparkling with the colours of the rainbow.

Julian tells us that at first she did not fully understand the vision, for reasons which we shall explore further along when we consider the parable by itself.³ In any case, after twenty years' reflection she understood the Lord to be God the Father, who had the appearance of Christ (because we cannot see God in this life, except in the incarnate Son). The servant represented both Adam, and the Son of God; and his falling showed both the sin of Adam, and the "fall" of the Son into humanity. In the transfiguration of the servant, from his falling into helplessness to his being raised into glory, she sees the crucifixion, the "harrowing of hell", and the subsequent glorification (resurrection and ascension) of the Son. Interestingly, Julian's description of her vision is very like Mark's account of the transfiguration, particularly with regard to Jesus' clothing:⁴

At this point /the servant's death, i.e., the crucifixion/ he began first to shew his might. For then he went into hell; and when he was there, then he raised up the great host out of the deep abyss, which had been truly knit to him in high heaven. His body lay in the grave until Easter morrow; but from that time he lay never more. For there was truly and rightly ended the wallowing and the writhing, the groaning and the mourning. Our foul mortal flesh that God's Son took upon himself, which was Adam's old kirtle, strait, threadbare and short, then by our Saviour was fairer and richer than was the clothing which I saw on the Father. For that clothing was blue; but Christ's clothing is now of a fair, seemly blending of colours which is so marvellous that I cannot describe it: for it is all of very worship. (ch. 51, p. 142).

Julian's visions reflect the classic understanding of salvation in the

3 See below, pp. 433ff.

4 Julian's description of the Son's new robe is reminiscent of that in Revelations, in which St. John describes a shining robe (Rev. 1:13 ff.) and an emerald rainbow surrounding the throne of Christ (4:2).

cross, in which Christ is seen to be victorious over death and hell. At the same time, she lends the Easter story her own emphasis: the transfiguration of humanity, into the likeness of Christ. Because the servant is both Adam (all-men) and Christ, she sees the glorification of humanity in Christ. This is a vision of our fulfilment, or completion, in Christ--the "grace" of the Holy Spirit.

Falling and Rising: The Nature of Transfiguration

Julian's visions of the transfiguration depict a sudden change in Jesus' appearance, such that he is glorified. The significance of what she sees, however, does not lie simply in Jesus' glorification, but in the contrast between his first state (in dying and falling) and his last (living, and rising in glory). In this sense, the transfiguration which she sees is a process which involves both pain and the remission of pain: first falling, and then rising. Similarly, her concept of our transfiguration, or growth, in the Spirit involves both "falling" and "rising". Although we experience both in this life, sometimes falling into sin and sometimes manifesting Christ in our own lives, she sees this life as essentially like that of the servant--waiting to be glorified, although that glorification has already taken place for us, in Christ.

Her argument is that the soul-to-be-saved shares in the being of Christ, in every aspect of his life: in his suffering and crucifixion, as well as in his resurrection and ascension into the presence of the Father. In this life, we never cease to live in the context of sin, and therefore of pain (or crucifixion). Nevertheless, we are transfigured through pain--our experience of falling--until the time that we are taken from the context of pain. By falling and rising, experiencing pain and joy, sin and divine Love, we mature in

Christ and are prepared for the time that we shall come into the presence of the Father. We shall see that for Julian, the work of the Spirit in this life is not to elevate us from the situation of pain or anxiety, even of sin; but to transform us through the experience of weakness and of healing. In the Spirit, each instance of pain becomes the opportunity for glorification, in which we become aware of our dependence upon God, and look forward to sharing fully in his glory.

In the Thirteenth Revelation she is explicitly shown that she will continue to sin, even though she is being "kept" by the Love of God:

God brought to mind that I would sin. But because of the liking that I had in beholding him, I did not attend promptly to that shewing. But our Lord in his great mercy abode, and gave me the grace to attend. This shewing I took for myself, individually; but by all the gracious comfort that followed, as you shall see, I was taught to take it for all my even-Christians, in general and in no way individually. Here I conceived a gentle fear; but to it our Lord answered, "I keep thee full surely". (ch. 37, p. 107).

Here, as later on in the Revelations, she gives the impression that she did not really expect to sin--or at least not so badly--now that she had come into a "oneing" relationship with God, through the touching of the Spirit. The prospect of continuing to fall, and of all Christians in general "falling" in sin despite the work of the Spirit, makes her fearful; and we shall see that the remainder of the Thirteenth Revelation is addressed to Julian's "gentle fear" on account of sin.

It may seem fairly obvious to us that Christians are "sinful", like anybody else; and that Christians must suffer pain. However, the idea--and particularly its implication, that pain and even sin are an integral part of our experience of transfiguration--is evidently new to Julian in her Revelation. Possibly, she expected to be "sanctified" by the Spirit, not perhaps so that

she would be perfect in this life, but at least in the sense that she would be more "spiritual", and live a life freer of the effects of sin than it might otherwise have been. Furthermore, the idea of "falling" is all the more painful to her once she has turned her thoughts toward God, and has appreciated the evil nature of sin. We shall see that, for her, the notion of transfiguration through "falling" and through pain opens up a new understanding of sanctification by the Spirit, and the nature of the "spiritual" life.

In much of medieval mystical theology, the work of grace is depicted as a steady movement of the soul "upwards", so to speak, towards God. The soul who is "in grace" is progressing in a journey, which leads him away from sin and the world, and into heaven. The most common metaphor for this movement of the soul is that of ascending a stair: the soul moves step-by-step up a ladder, like the stair seen by Jacob to reach into the heavens, with angels moving up and down on it (Genesis 28:12 ff.). The image of the "stair" is an old one in Christian spirituality, but it was especially popular in Julian's day: thus her contemporary, Walter Hilton, quite logically entitled his spiritual guide (written for an anchoress like Julian) the Ladder (or Scale) of Perfection.⁵ In this

5 In her edition of the Scale Miss Underhill writes:

This image of a spiritual ladder, no doubt suggested by Jacob's dream, is a favourite with the mystics. It had been used by St. John Climacus and by St. Benedict, and was a commonplace of religious symbolism in Hilton's time. Its suggestion of necessary effort and perseverance, of the soul's achievement of perfection as a gradual ascent, doubly conditioned by God's grace and man's willed and often arduous striving, were congenial to a time in our religious history when the idea of sanctity as a veritable state of being, slowly and hardly attained, was well understood. It is useful to us still, as a reminder that the life of the spirit--involving as it does the sublimation of every human impulse and desire--is fully won only by long and patient effort; not suddenly given to the eager neophyte who expresses his willingness to receive it. Hilton, however, using this conventional symbol for

image, the soul is seen to move upwards principally through contemplation, and discipline in prayer and in works of charity--each step being prompted and assisted by the Spirit, with the cooperation of the soul.⁶

Another popular image of the soul's spiritual progress was that of purgation, in which one was said to be "purged" of sin--perhaps through illness, asceticism, or through the discipline of prayer. The object of this purgation would be to purify the will, so that the desires of the world (lust, folly or whatever) might not only be overcome, but might cease to occur for the soul. The Ancrene Riwe hints at specific disciplines to overcome specific vices, although the initial importance of asceticism and contemplation would be for "purgation" in general.⁷ Again, an important aspect of this idea--which Julian shares--is that for the soul to progress in its "purgation" it must be willingly disposed to God, and share in the work of spiritual transformation. Through purgation, the soul deliberately rids itself of worldly things, turning its whole attention toward God.

In both images, of the "ladder" and of purgation, the soul is said to move towards God in definite stages. These stages, or spiritual planes, are

his title, and assuming that conception of the spiritual life for which it stands, deals chiefly under another metaphor with the difficulties and consolations which his "ghostly sister" the anchoress for whom he writes will encounter on her upward climb. [The other metaphor is that of "defacing" of the soul, which is the image of God, through sin. Underhill, op. cit., p. xxx]

6 Cf. Reynolds, in SGL, pp. xliv ff.

Julian has almost exclusively been interpreted in this light, especially by Catholic writers. Cf. also Molinari, op. cit., pp. 78-100, 116 ff.

7 See The Ancrene Riwe, particularly Part IV ("Temptations") and Part VIII ("External Rules").

depicted differently by different authors, but on the whole the spiritual journey is thought of in terms of three major planes.⁸ At the first stage, the soul is trying to rid itself of worldly desires; hence this stage is itself referred to as "purgation". The second stage is that of new faith (in which the light of the Spirit shines into the darkness of the soul), and is therefore known as "illumination". The third stage is that in which one passes from faith into mystical union with God: the "unitive" stage. Sometimes, these stages of spiritual life are specifically linked to one's vocation: laymen, who cannot devote much time to contemplative prayer or to ascetical practices, remain more or less on the first level, and are referred to as "pilgrims". The life of a layman is the "active" life, in which one is actively at work in the world, in his "pilgrimage", doing what he can to live in imitation of the life of Christ--the life of charity, through grace. The second stage is that of religious (including, here, hermits and anchorites/ anchoresses) who have renounced the world to lead a life of contemplation. At the highest level are those (religious) who have so entered into the contemplative life that they are "dead" to the world; in their lives, it becomes possible to enter into spiritual union with God, or a vision ("beatific vision"), by special grace, of God's glory even while in this life. The three types, or stages, of Christian life are said to be those of "beginner", "proficient", and "perfect". In the popular allegorical novel of Julian's time, Piers Ploughman, these are represented by three characters--Dowel (Do-well),

8 For a discussion of the whole theme of the "ladder", purgation and the three stages, particularly with reference to Langland, cf. Pepler, op. cit., esp. pp. 36-54. See also The Cloud, op. cit., ch. 1, (pp. 51 ff.).

Dobet (Do-better) and Dobest, who correspond to three stages of Christ's own work in the world.⁹

The spiritual progression which she depicts in the Revelations is similar in some respects to what we have sketched above, but its overall character is fundamentally different. There is nothing in the Revelations which looks like an argument against either the concept of the "ladder", or the concept of purgation (as through asceticism). However, it is noteworthy that she never uses the image of the "ladder" at all, particularly since she is writing for those who would be "Christ's lovers"--i.e., those who would be contemplatives. In fact, she never refers to the "ascent" of the soul at all. What ought to be a major theme, in light of her contemporary theology, goes unmentioned: she does not refer to "stages" of the contemplative life--at least not in the imagery or terminology of her day--and she does not concern herself with the various distinctions between types of spirituality, or even between the contemplative and the active life. The image which she suggests, correspondingly, is not that of a steady ascent, as up a ladder, but one of falling and rising--each fall bringing with it a greater "rise", and the falls themselves benefiting the soul.

Similarly, she conceives of "purgation" in her own fashion, mentioning it only rarely, and then in unique terms. It has often been pointed out that she

9 Cf. Piers Ploughman Books XIII and XIX (Goodridge, op. cit., pp. 151 ff., 234 and 311 n. 8).

The Ancrene Riwe refers to the pilgrimage, the stages of contemplation, and the three degrees of progress as follows:

There are living on earth three kinds of men who are the elect of God. The first may be compared to good pilgrims, the second to the dead, the third to people hung with their own consent on Jesus' cross. The first are good, the second are better, the third best of all. (op. cit., p. 154).

nowhere refers to asceticism, or any form of discipline in "purging" the soul from sinful desires. It is possible, as has been argued, that this aspect of the spiritual life has simply been assumed by her, or else that it is actually present in the Revelations, though perhaps somewhat disguised by her own language.¹⁰ More likely, however, she simply conceives of "purgation" in an entirely new way. She will argue, from her Thirteenth Revelation (ch. 39), that it is the experience of sin which "purges" the soul-to-be-saved from sin--a remarkable argument, which hinges on the fact that, for her, it is sin which causes pain. Life itself, because it involves pain and sin, contains its own discipline, which is laid on us by God himself. For this reason, she finds it unnecessary to discuss ascetical discipline (for the purpose of "purgation"); and she sees "falling" in sin and in pain as intrinsic to the spiritual life.

Finally, it is worth noting once more that she does not distinguish either between stages in the life of the Christian, or between Christians of different spiritual "experience". She does refer, once, to "them that are wise"

10 Cf. Coleman, op. cit., p. 148:

In her spiritual ascent Julian favoured the open and upward way. She never hints at macerations; her ascetical practices seem to have been limited to those recommended in the New Testament: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. She knew the methods of the via negativa, and now and again, in the interests of concentrated effort, was ready to adopt them. [Coleman cites ch. 5 of the Revelations]

Clifton Wolters, in his edition of the Revelations, simply assumes that Julian has taken for granted the ascetical disciplines (Wolters, p. 39), following the opinion of Molinari and others (Molinari, op. cit. p. 76).

There is in fact no evidence of any specific ascetical practices in the Revelations at all. Ch. 5 refers to "naughting" to the world, but no means of achieving it are given. Any ascetical practices Julian may have followed herself must be deduced from the Ancrene Riwle, although it is not known how rigidly the Riwle might have been followed in Julian's day.

(ch. 9)--possibly an allusion to contemplatives (religious), or else to educated Christians or to theologians. However, she concludes in this passage that "we are all one in love"; and the general thrust of her Revelations, as we shall see, is that all her "even-christians" experience both a falling, and a reward, in their relationship to Christ in the Spirit. To turn to God in whatever degree will be seen as opening the soul to the greatest possible blessing (ch. 14); and the relationship of all Christians to the Lord is the same--the relationship of "oneing" in him:

And through the great endless love that God hath to all mankind, he maketh no division, in love, between the blessed soul of Christ and the least soul that shall be saved. (ch. 54, p. 150).

This is not to say that, for her, there is no such thing as spiritual "progress" in our relationship to God, in the Spirit. We have referred to her concept of our deepening relationship to Christ as "growing up", in which the soul is seen by her to take on the characteristics of Jesus' own life, because Jesus actually lives in the soul-to-be-saved. Her point is, rather, the simple one that it is unrealistic to promise not to sin, because sin is a condition of this life--even as the Spirit is at work in us. Because we remain in the context of sin, the experience of the soul-to-be-saved is not that he ceases to be tempted by the world, or to suffer pain in the world; but that he may in fact be tempted more and more, and suffer more and more gravely, like the crucified Christ. Nor does he cease to "fall" in sin, but his falling may become even harder than before. The nature of his suffering changes, however, as his relationship to sin changes.

In the transfiguring work of the Spirit, the soul's relationship to sin changes, from suffering helplessly from sin (being enslaved to it, or assenting freely to it) to deliberately choosing Christ over sin, i.e., not willing

to sin. Sin itself becomes a "scourge" to the soul-to-be-saved--a "penance". The Christian begins to suffer less from anxiety or doubtful dread, the particular pains of sin; but this suffering is replaced by the desire to be rid of sin, and by longing for God--a new kind of spiritual pain. At the same time, this new "pain", which will be seen to be a healing process which turns us away from sin, is augmented by moments in which we fall into doubt or into wrath. This is true of any contemplative soul, including Julian--who, following her Fifteenth Revelation, experiences the greatest "fall" in the Revelations, when she denies the Christ whom she has just seen (ch. 66).

One of the most colourful passages in the Revelations is her description of her first conscious experience of "falling and rising" during her Revelations. She describes how, as part of her Seventh Revelation, she experienced a great love for God: a "sovereign ghostly liking in my soul", such that she was confident that her faith could not be shaken, and that she would not fall again into anxiety or pain (ch. 12). This spiritual high point soon gave way, however, to a spiritual "low": She became depressed and anxious, and no longer felt like living. Nothing remained for her of the previous excitement except for a dim "faith, hope and charity"--more a matter of her will, than of her true feelings. After a moment, her former assurance and ease of pain were suddenly restored. At that point she felt once more that nothing could upset her; but no sooner had she felt this certainty, than she was plunged back into despair again; and on it went:

And then I experienced again the pain; and then the liking; and now the one, and now the other, divers times--I suppose about twenty times. In the time of the joy I could have said with St. Paul: "Nothing shall part me from the charity of Christ". And in the pain, I could have said with St. Peter: "Lord, save me, I perish". (ch. 15, p. 73).

From this experience she concludes that, regardless of our faith, we are weak, fickle, and undependable. Elsewhere, she remarks that man is "changeable" in this life, in contrast to God who is consistent Love (ch. 45). The proof of our weakness is that sometimes we are left to experience our weakness in pain and anxiety, doubt or wrath; while at other times we are raised to joy and assurance by the Spirit. Thus it is not so much a question of our own personal guilt or merit before God, as of God's Love for the souls he has made:

It is God's will that we know that he keepeth us surely, ever the same, in woe and in weal; and that for profit of his soul as a man is sometimes left to himself, without his sin always being the cause. For in this time I had not sinned so as to be left to myself; also it was all so sudden. I did not deserve, either, to have the blessed feelings. Our Lord giveth them freely, when so he will; and sometimes suffereth us to be in woe. And both are the one love. (ch. 15, p. 73).

Other mystics contemporary with Julian--Walter Hilton, for example--recognize that at times the soul, even the Christian soul, falls into sin, which experience is depicted as the result of God withdrawing" his grace from us, temporarily, for our own good.¹¹ She differs primarily in arguing that at these times the "grace" of God has not in fact been withdrawn ("he keepeth us surely..."), although in a sense one might seem to be "left to himself"; and this experience of "falling" is not a direct consequence of our own sin, any more than the experience of "bliss" is due to our own merit.

Julian's theology of "falling and rising" is developed at length through chapters 47-49, and 61-85, although it characterises her book as a whole.

11 Cf. the Ancrene Riwe, Part IV; and Hilton's Exposition of Psalm 91 (a recent edition is to be found in an anthology: Walsh, James, and Eric College, Of the Knowledge of Ourselves and of God: A Fifteenth-Century Spiritual Florilegium, Moberay and Co., London, 1961.). It is a common theme in medieval spirituality, and is to be found later in the works of Teresa of Ávila.

Through these chapters, she restates her earlier insight that God does all things that are done in his Love. Pain, on the other hand, is permitted by God: it is the consequence of sin, or non-being, in humanity. The pain which sin causes is meant to turn us away from sin, teaching us to rely on God, as our divine Mother--just as pain indicates an illness in the body, and teaches us to avoid the things that are harmful to us. In "falling" we experience pain, and learn to hate sin as much as does God, who heals us from our "fall" and restores us with his Love.

As is well known, Julian compares this aspect of her vision with the way in which a child continually falls and hurts itself, either through disobedience, or simply because it is a child. Sometimes this "falling" is permitted, so that the child will grow up:

The mother may suffer her child to fall sometimes, and to be distressed in different ways, for its own profit. But she can never permit that any manner of peril come to her child, because of her love. And though, possibly, an earthly mother may suffer her child to perish, our heavenly Mother Jesus can never suffer us who are his children to perish. For he is almighty, all-wisdom and all-love: and so is none but he. Blessed may he be! (ch. 61, p. 166).

It is important to remember that Julian's understanding of "falling", as permitted by our Mother, is developed out of her own experience of intense pain, in which she lay for seven days at the point of death. She is not an "armchair theologian", and her writing is not theoretical or abstractly philosophical. She experiences a severe "fall" herself, in her illness, and a worse one in her experiences of doubt and (later on) of dread, in the temptation of the fiend (the Sixteenth Revelation). Through these things she recognizes a growth in her own understanding of the Lord's love for her, and in her ability to love others. Thus her suffering lends an intensely personal character to her theology. For her, the work of the Spirit is never an impersonal work

upon human nature, which can be dispensed or withdrawn; but it is a personal "working", of our Mother with her children. The relationship which God has with his children, in the slow process of rearing humanity in his Love, cannot be withdrawn: it is the Spirit's work within human nature, and is permanent, in the incarnate Love of God.

Within that part of her theology which we have characterized here as "charity given", she discusses a variety of ways (or "workings") in which the Spirit is active in our lives, drawing us into a "oneing" relationship with God, in Christ. The Christian is aware of the Spirit at work when he prays, for example, or repudiates sin and wills to do good works. The Spirit, too, is responsible for bringing us to faith, and for establishing peace and love in our hearts, in place of contrariness and wrath. At the same time, however, she sees the Spirit at work through all things that happen in our lives: through pain, through our bodily needs (which cause us to rely on God), even through the experience of despair. In her view, God turns all things to our good, if we love him.

We shall see that certain of the "workings" of the Spirit are recognized by Julian as more rare than others, so that they appear as more valuable to those who experience them; or as more important, in turning us to Christ. These include the gifts of faith and of the sacraments, of prayer, of the teaching of the Church, of our ability to think, and of his special "touchings" or "shewings", which include Julian's visions themselves. Some of the gifts of the Spirit to us appear more extraordinary than others, even when they are not to be thought of more highly: her visions for example, will be seen as clearly subordinate to the teachings of the Church, which they are supposed to elucidate. She suggests, in any case, that her visions are of no

value at all unless they turn her to greater love, for God and for her fellow men (ch. 9). It must be remembered all through the Revelations, however, that Julian does not see the Spirit as "intervening" in the world from time to time, leaving the more "ordinary" events to nature. All things happen by the Love of God, which means that the whole Trinity is involved in every moment of life, in all things that happen. The Spirit can never be detached from nature, because the milieu of the Spirit's work is nature, including the senses. She argues that the supreme "spiritual" experience--the direct vision of God, in absolute communion with the Trinity in heaven--will be one of heightened sensual experience:¹²

It is thus that we may, with his sweet grace in our own meek, continual prayer, come into him now, in this life, by many secret touchings and sweet ghostly sights and feelings, measured out to us according as our simpleness can support it. This is wrought, and shall be, by the grace of the Holy Ghost until we die in longing for love. Then shall we all come into our Lord--ourselves clearly knowing, God abundantly having--until we are all endlessly hid in God--him truly seeing and abundantly feeling, him ghostly hearing and delectably smelling, him all sweetly swallowing [tasting]. And there shall we see God face to face. (ch. 43, p. 120).

In summary, we may see her concept of "falling and rising" as part of her holistic understanding of the work of the Spirit in our lives, remaking us into the likeness of Christ. Fulfilment in the Spirit is the completion of what we already are, rather than a point at which we take flight from what we are into another, more "spiritual", realm. There is a continuity between our sinful selves, and ourselves fulfilled in Christ--just as, in her vision, the servant is transfigured into a great Lord (the glorified Christ), yet distinctly remains who he is, the same Lord. The Spirit does not repudiate our human nature,

12 The reference to "swallowing" may refer to the Eucharist.

but fulfills it--and even uses its fallen-ness to turn us to God.

As before, there is no part of the Revelations which is concerned exclusively with the transfiguring work of the Spirit, even though the character of this transfiguration (in "falling and rising") is more dramatically described in Ch. 47-49, and 61-85. Some of her visions depict certain of the Spirit's works more vividly than others, however, and this is reflected in portions of the Revelations which tend to concentrate on these "workings". Julian devotes space to the nature of prayer (primarily chapters 41-43); the problems of sin and blame (the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Revelations as a whole, ch. 32-55); the relation between faith and sacraments (ch. 57); the nature of the Church (ch. 62 and 65); the nature of demonic oppression and the testing (or "night") of faith (ch. 66-72); and the experience of dread (ch. 73-76). All of these together describe a continual movement in Love, as Julian becomes more deeply "oned" to Christ through her experiences of pain and of reassurance, of despair and of the deep Love of God.

Contrition, Compassion and Longing for God: the "Wounds" of the Spirit

Julian tells us, in chapter 2 of the Revelations, that some time before her illness she prayed for three gifts of God's grace. These were "mind of the passion"; a bodily illness so severe that she would be near death (which illness was to occur in her youth, i.e., before she passed thirty years of age); and three "wounds", of "true contrition", "kind compassion", and an "earnest longing for God". Obviously, she already knew something about the passion of Christ when she made these three petitions; but her prayer was specifically for a deeper understanding of the crucifixion, which she thought could best be had by being "present" herself, through faith:

As for the first, I believed that I had experience, to some degree, of the passion of Christ; but I desired to have still more, by the grace of God. I would I had been, that time, with Magdalen and with the others that were Christ's lovers, that I might have seen, bodily, the passion that our Lord suffered for me--that I might have suffered with him as did those others that loved him. And therefore I desired a bodily sight, that I might have more knowledge of the bodily pains of our Saviour, and of the compassion of our Lady and of all his true lovers that were living at that time and saw his pains. I would I had been one of them and had suffered with them. (ch. 2, p. 47).

Julian's prayer ought not to be taken too lightly, since she is clearly praying for a "bodily sight", i.e., what is known as a "corporeal vision"--an unusual manifestation of the crucified Lord to her, such that he would be actually present before her eyes, and not merely in her mind. Possibly, she had experienced something of the kind before, in that she says she already had "experience, to some degree" of the passion.¹³ More likely, she means that she had already felt some degree of sympathy for the pains of Christ--perhaps through illness in the past--but now she wanted to feel even more strongly the significance of his suffering for her.

The idea to pray for a bodily illness stemmed, she says, from the desire to be "purified"--to come so near to death that thereafter she would live a more godly life. Perhaps she felt that, up to the time of her prayer, she had not paid enough attention to the possibilities of heaven and hell. That she should suffer "in her youth" increases the poignancy of her personal sacrifice, in order to be closer to the Lord, and may be meant to refer to Jesus' age at the crucifixion. She does not explain her reasoning; but in any case, she prayed to be frightened by "all the dreads, temptations of fiends, and all manner of pains except the departing of the soul" (ch. 2). She also felt that

13 Suggested by Molinari, op. cit., pp. 24 ff.

this preliminary exposure to death and to the temptations of the fiends, which was supposed to accompany the death of any Christian, would render her better equipped to cope with these things in the actual hour of her death, at some other time. Whether this prayer was the product of a naive and immature piety, or whether it was, to the contrary, the result of carefully guided contemplation (on the assumption that Julian was a nun at this time), she was at least aware that her prayer was not of the ordinary kind.¹⁴ She therefore attached the condition to her prayers, both for the vision of the crucifixion and for the illness, that God would grant them only if it were his will for her to experience them.

She was reasonably certain that her third petition was a proper prayer as it stood. Consequently she "asked for the third mightily and without any condition." By the time of her actual illness, at the age of thirty, she had forgotten about her original three petitions, except for this last prayer for the three "wounds"--specifically, the wound of compassion--and she did not expect to receive a vision of the crucifixion (ch. 2).¹⁵ Evidently, she did not even connect the illness itself with her original petition for a sickness to the point of death.

14 Julian's prayer for the three wounds has been compared to Anselm's Meditations, following the pattern of three "piercings" of contrition, compassion and longing. Cf. Ward, "Faith Seeking Understanding", op. cit., 27-28. A comparison of Anselm's Prayers and Meditations with the Revelations would indicate, however, that if Julian borrowed the pattern of prayer (directly or indirectly) from Anselm, her theology nevertheless runs counter to it, particularly with regard to the concept of contrition out of fear. Compare Anselm's "Meditation I" to Ch. 5 of the Revelations. (The Prayers and Meditations, trans. Sr. Benedicta Ward, Penguin Books, 1973, p. 221).

15 Contra. Molinari, who suggests that Julian changed her mind from desiring a corporeal vision, to praying simply for compassion (op. cit., p. 49).

For this reason, she tells us that when the visions began she was "truly astounded" (ch. 4). Her astonishment did not end there, however. It is clear that, as her visions progressed, her understanding of what she had prayed for, and of what she saw (as opposed to what she expected to see) and even of the Christian faith as a whole, grew far beyond her anticipation. She illustrates her surprise at the content of her "shewings" throughout her book. Sometimes this takes the form of simple exclamations (such as Benedicite, Domine! or "Lord bless us!"); and sometimes it takes the form of regret, as for example when she says that she would not have asked for an experience of the passion if she had understood its genuine horror, and the extent to which she was to become involved:

The shewing of Christ's pains filled me full of pain. For though I knew well that he had suffered just the once; yet he wished to shew me his pain and fill me with mind of it, as I had before desired of him. In all this time of Christ's presence, I felt no pain except for Christ's pain. Then it seemed I knew but little what his pain was that I had asked for; and like a wretch I repented me--thinking that had I known what it was like, I would have been loath to pray for it. For my pain seemed to pass beyond any bodily death; and I thought: "Is any pain in hell like this?" And I was answered in my reason: "Hell is a different pain, for there is despair." Of all the pains that lead to salvation, this is the greatest--to see the Lover suffer. How could any pain be greater than to see him, that is all my life, all my bliss and all my joy, suffer? Here felt I steadfastly that I love Christ so much above myself that there was no pain that could be suffered like to the sorrow I had, to see him in pain. (ch. 17, p. 77).

In this passage, we can see that her experience of "mind of the passion", and of bodily sickness, went beyond her expectations. Certainly her illness was granted in generous measure: she suffered for a week, was thought to be dead more than once, and came so near to death in her own mind that she did not expect to recover. Similarly, her prayer for the three "wounds" is granted in depth. She prayed for the virtue of contrition, so that she might be truly

penitent for her sins, and therefore truly absolved of them.¹⁶ Her prayer for compassion meant looking upon the dying Christ with the love of his mother, in true devotion; and in "longing for God" she meant to turn her eyes away from worldly things, to contemplate God alone. What happened, in fact, was quite different. She experienced a deep, painful contrition for sin, not merely for herself but for all mankind. She developed "compassion", as we see it above, in the form of genuine suffering ("I felt no pain except for Christ's pain"), eventually sharing in his compassion for all men in their sin. Finally, she experienced a deep longing for God, not merely in the sense of wanting to escape this world to be with God, but in her desire for all man to know God's love and his joy.

Julian's prayer for the three "wounds" of the Spirit forms the background for all that takes place in her Revelations. In each "shewing", she is drawn into contrition, compassion and longing for God, each "wound" leading to the others and all three developing concurrently. Together, the three wounds of the Spirit constitute her experience of the crucifixion itself; and she begins to share in the cross not only as an observer, but from "inside" the experience of Christ.¹⁷ The wounds are, then, the occasion for her own transfiguration or "fulfilling" in the Spirit, in which she actually shares in the

16 The sacrament of Penance included the stages of contrition, confession, and absolution (or satisfaction). There was some debate by Julian's time about the exact role of contrition (and its nature, as opposed to attrition or "true contrition") in the forgiveness of sins, particularly in the sacrament of Penance itself. However, it was supposed on all sides that true contrition would be the first necessary step towards absolution and satisfaction for sin. (cf. New Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. XI, New York, 1967, pp. 73 ff.).

17 This is the medieval meaning of com-passion, which is not adequately conveyed by our modern word. If the object of this prayer is "purging" or "purification" (ch. 2), it is essential for the individual to enter mystically into the pain of the cross.

experience and the person of Jesus.

Her first experience of pain in the Spirit, in the wound of contrition, is not discussed at length until the Thirteenth Revelation, a third of the way through the Revelations (ch. 39). This fact, which has previously been overlooked in the literature, is of utmost significance for understanding her theology of grace. In Julian's day (as today), contrition was regarded as the first step of "grace" towards union with God. In the sacrament of penance, for example, contrition is obviously first: contrition, followed by confession, followed by absolution. Walter Hilton, and other spiritual writers of the time, stress contrition as the first willful act of the soul, if it is to receive God.¹⁸ Julian, however, occasionally seems to reverse the order of contrition/absolution, to suggest that contrition can follow the experience of forgiveness in our apprehension of grace.

To understand the place of contrition-compassion-longing for God in Julian's thought, it is helpful to review briefly the order of her experiences of love and of forgiveness in the visions themselves. In the early chapters of the Revelations, in which she describes the first "shewings", she is reassured over and over again of the steadfast love of God for her, and for the whole universe. In the First Revelation her heart is filled with joy at the sight of Christ, in whom she understands the Trinity (ch. 4). Her first experience, in general, is of joy and reassurance: what she (or a scribe) describes as "sufficient strength against every temptation of the fiends" (in the chapter heading, ch. 4). We have already observed that later on, she momentarily loses her assurance in the face of temptation, or oppression (ch. 15). She

18 Cf. The Scale, Book II, ch. 15.

recovers, however, and ultimately her strength is greater for it. In subsequent chapters she sees that God is "everything that is good" (ch. 5); that God delights in us, and wants for us to pray to him directly and openly (ch. 6); and that our greatest joy is to be found in him (ch. 7, 8). She tells us that these "shewings" had a profound effect on her, of turning her outward in love for all her "even-christians" (ch. 9).

In the Revelations which follow, she begins to experience the pain of the cross for the first time; simultaneously, however, she sees that the cross is the occasion for joy--both Jesus' own joy, in saving us, and our own joy, in that our sins are healed by his blood. At this point, she observes that so far she has not seen sin at all (ch. 11, 27). Even the greatest individual sin, Adam's sin, appears to her only as the occasion for the greatest "one-ing" in God's love. She sees the "thirst" of the saviour to draw all men to himself (ch. 31); that we need not attempt to know anything of the Trinity except for his Love for us, in Christ (ch. 33, 34), in which God reveals to us what we need to know, in his Love. Finally, she sees that sin shall be transfigured to our joy, particularly in two "great deeds" which God shall work for our own salvation, and has already begun for us in this life (ch. 29-38).

After her vision of all these things, each a reassurance of God's love for sinful human beings like herself, she is brought to a renewed experience of contrition. By seeing the goodness of God in Christ, she comes to hate whatever damages our relationship to him, whatever is in-human, and (therefore) whatever is sinful. This causes her to regret her own sin, which has brought pain to Christ and has kept her from God. She sees sin only in light of the love of the saviour, and she concludes:

Sin is the sharpest scourge that any chosen soul can be smitten with--a scourge which greatly afflicteth a man or woman, breaketh him in pieces and purgeth him of his self-love; to the extent that at times he thinketh himself fit for nothing but to sink into hell; until such time as, by the touching of the Holy Ghost, contrition overtaketh him and turneth his bitterness into hope in God's mercy. Then his wounds begin to heal and his soul to revive as he is converted to the life of Holy Church. The Holy Ghost leadeth him to confession to reveal his sins willingly, nakedly and truly; with great sorrow and with great shame for having befouled the fair image of God. (ch. 39, p. 109).

Sorrow for "having befouled the fair image of God" comes, therefore, when one has seen the image to which we are meant to conform, in the humanity of Christ. Thus contrition may be seen as a response to God's love, as we experience it; it does not in any case, initiate our relationship to God in love. Sin, of course, does not act as a "scourge" for everyone, precisely because not everyone is aware of its nature in contrast to God's compassionate love. Julian is aware of this, arguing that it is the "chosen soul"--the one who has already experienced the "touching" of the Spirit--who finds sin intolerable. Apart from the Love which one experiences in the Spirit, sin produces only bitterness and evil, destructive suffering which Julian will characterise as despair and anxiety. The "wound" of contrition, on the other hand, is healing and transforming, part of the experience of transfiguration in this life.

If contrition grows out of the painful experience of God's love for us, in our sin, compassion also grows out of a painful experience of God's love. As we have seen, Julian is brought to compassion for Christ by experiencing in her own body the pains that Christ suffered. Similarly, she will be given compassion for her fellow-men by suffering their despair herself, in the temptation by the fiend (ch. 64); and the ultimate example of compassion will be, for her, an understanding of how Christ suffered with all men at once, and continues to share in our pain, including the pain of despair.

Julian's experience of painful contrition and compassion turns her to a deep longing for God, and the joy that he gives. In the Fourteenth Revelation (ch. 41-63), as she is taught about the nature of prayer and forgiveness, she begins to experience the desire to be one with God--even though she sees that Christ is "oned" to her already (ch. 54). In this new longing she learns that the experience of "oneing" is to be had when she looks at Jesus, contemplating his love for her; but that whenever she turns to herself, she "falls" (ch. 56, 61). Even the attempt to understand her own sin, with the idea of being truly contrite, only provides an opportunity for "falling", in despair and fear of God. True longing for God, as she experiences it herself, is stimulated by God's love, and by the "oneing" which we have in love--not by fear of God, or even by the desire to please God or to be contrite.

Following the experience of deep longing, she experiences once more an apparent "absence" of God. This causes her longing to deepen, and to become acute (the Fifteenth Revelation, ch. 64-65). In her final Revelation (ch. 66 ff.) she experiences despair, in her confrontation with the fiend; but at the same time she sees once more the "homely" love of God, in which the Son is living in the midst of her own soul. Here her earlier experience, of having God and of wanting him (ch. 10) is repeated, but more deeply. In her experience of "longing", therefore, she is once again subjected both to "falling" and to "rising", to the desire for God and to the reassurance of his presence.

It is significant that she does not experience dread until her final "shewing", which she describes almost at the close of the Revelations (ch. 64 ff.). This provides us with an important insight, that true dread--like true longing--does not come until we intimately know God, and desire his love. Julian refers to her experience as darkness, a "night" in contrast to the light of God's love

which hitherto had characterised her visions.¹⁹ The visitation by the fiend itself occurs at night, and is the only one of her visions to occur in darkness, or to begin in her sleep. She will draw a sharp distinction, however, between this experience of dread, in which the soul-to-be-saved "dreads" (or respects) only God, as a loving Father; and the kind of dread which is produced only by sin apart from a vision of God--the dread which leads to despair. She understands that her final experience of dread, which is really a deep desire for God himself, will never be fully satisfied as long as she is in this life. At the same time, she sees once more that God's desire, in stimulating our longing for him, is to share his Love with us, and to mature us in his Love--to be "oned" with him, not only because of what he has done for us, but because we want to be in his presence and to share in his Love.

The summary of her experience of the Revelations is therefore that contrition, compassion and true longing for God are all engendered by the Love of God itself, which we know in the "touching" of the Holy Spirit, in turning us to Jesus. Through contrition, compassion and longing--all of which are painful experiences--salvation, or healing, is worked out in our lives. Salvation is a living relationship with God in which we are brought to deep love, through the experience of being loved. The fact that this bond of love is permanent, and visible in Christ, our Mother, makes us contrite, and desirous of nothing but his Love:

Most precious our good Lord keepeth us when it seemeth to us that we are well nigh forsaken and cast away for our sins. And because we see that we have deserved it, and because of the meekness that we get

19 Julian's experience of darkness is not to be directly equated with the "nights" of the senses and the soul which are described by St. John of the Cross. Scholars are divided on the question of whether Julian's experience is similar. See below, pp. 452 ff. and n. 41.

thereby, we are raised high in God's sight, by his grace. Then also when our Lord will, he visiteth us with his special grace, with such contrition and also with compassion and true longing to God that we are at once delivered of sins and pain, and lifted up to bliss, equal with the saints. By contrition we are made clean, by compassion we are made ready, by true longing for God we are made worthy. These are the three means, so I understood, whereby all souls come to heaven (that is to say, those that have been sinners) and shall be saved. It is by these medicines that every sinful soul must be healed. And after he is healed, his wounds are still seen before God--yet not as wounds but as honourable scars. (ch. 39, p. 110).

We have noted from time to time that a general characteristic of Julian's approach to theology is to see our human response in the Spirit as a mirror of God's own movement to us, just as human nature mirrors the being of God, particularly as we see it in Jesus. In her concept of contrition, compassion and longing, she sees once more that our own experience reflects the being of God, which can be seen in the face of Jesus. She sees three expressions in Jesus' face which are prior to our own three modes of response:

I have understanding of three lookings of our Lord. The first is the look which he shewed in his passion, whilst he was with us in this life, in his dying. And though this looking is mournful and sorrowful, yet it is glad and merry: because he is God. The second look is of pity and ruth /mercy/ and compassion. And this sheweth he to all his lovers who have need of his mercy, with sureness of keeping. The third is the blissful look, such as shall be without end. And this was oftenest shewed and continued longest. (ch. 71, p. 184).

In these three "lookings" we may note once more that she does not see an angry look, nor one of blame or severity. Nevertheless she is moved to deep contrition, and to despise her sin. Contrition, as she understands it in light of Jesus' face, is at once "mournful" (because of the reality of sin) and "merry" (because of the reality of salvation). Throughout the Revelations she maintains a kind of realism in her attitude which is summed up here: realistically taking into account the pain of sin, and at the same time, realistically noting that it is love itself, and only love, which brings about contrition,

compassion, and deep love--the healing which is required in the pain of sin.

In what follows, we shall turn to the practical expressions of the three "wounds", as they reflect the expressions on Jesus' face which she sees in the crucifix. She particularly describes her "wounding" through the experience of prayer, in its various forms; the experience of "falling" in sin, and dread; the experience of suffering, in general; the experience of guilt and of forgiveness, which brings about faith; and finally, the experience of loving God, in the Love which is given by the Spirit. All of these serve to "fulfill" her in joy and in love, and each comes through the working of the Spirit, bringing about in Julian the response which God requires of her, for her own joy.

CHAPTER TWO: "ONEING" THROUGH PRAYER (CONTRITION)

Three Kinds of Prayer in the Revelations

It is appropriate to begin with Julian's theology of prayer, because in her words, "Prayer oneth the soul to God" (ch. 43). The Revelations describes a kind of extended prayer, in which Julian spoke with God and learned from him through sixteen visions. She consequently devoted her entire life to prayer, withdrawing into her anchorhold to spend most of her waking hours in conversation only with God. Her book, like her theology as a whole, springs out of twenty years of deep reflective prayer, as she tells us in the Revelations. Undoubtedly, although her book has much to offer us today in even a brief study, we could only understand it with any depth if we, too, spent years in prayer, experiencing for ourselves what she describes. Beyond these things, however, she tells us that our whole life is our "prayer" before God, regardless of what we are doing, or even whether we think of ourselves in relation to God at all. In this sense, prayer is the context of her theology, and it is one of its most important themes.²⁰

In the Revelations she describes essentially three kinds of prayer: "kind yearning", which we may think of as petition; "beholding", or "inward prayer", which is contemplation; and "thanksgiving", or praise. These three modes of prayer describe a movement of the soul, from petition to contemplation to

20 It is not accidental that the only published work of book-length to appear to date, to deal with Julian's theology, is concerned almost exclusively with Julian's theology of prayer (Molinari, *op. cit.*). In his title Molinari identifies Julian's "teaching" with her theology of prayer altogether; and in scope he limits her concept of prayer to that of modern Jesuit theology--particularly as defined by St. John of the Cross (!).

praise. At the same time, the three are intertwined, so that for the mature lover of God they cannot be separated, and each leads into the others. Even in our ordinary feelings and day-to-day experiences, we pass through all three modes of prayer as she describes them: desiring things from God, just by having needs; quietly contemplating God; and experiencing delight in God, which sometimes breaks out into praise or song. The model for all these kinds of prayer, as Julian sees it, is Mary, the Mother of God. In her visions of Mary, she learns of the human response to God in the Spirit, in desiring God, loving him and "beholding" him in silence, and in praising him, remembering the Magnificat, the Song of Mary, which Julian said in her daily prayers.

We recall that in her First "shewing", after Julian's vision of the bleeding head of Christ had begun, she saw in her mind's eye the Virgin Mary at the time of the annunciation.²¹ Mary is seen to marvel at the great condescension of the Son of God, in being born of "a simple creature"; and her response is quiet awe, and obedience. In this vision Mary represents, for Julian, the true response to God's initiative--the response which we share in prayer:

God also shewed me, in part, the wisdom and the truth of her soul. Wherein I understood the reverent beholding with which she beheld her God, who is her Maker; she marvelled, with great reverence, that he willed to be born of her that was a simple creature of his making. For this was her marvelling--that he who was her Maker, willed to be born of her who was made. And this wisdom and truth--

21 The exact nature of Julian's vision, according to the scholastic categories of "corporeal", "imaginative", and "intellectual" visions, has been argued at length by Molinari (*op. cit.*, pp. 32-48, 60-70). It is to be noted that Molinari's classifications are primarily derived from John of the Cross (*Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Bk. II) and various recent "manuals of Mystical Theology". Whether these are of any value in understanding the nature of Julian's own visions seems doubtful; and in any case the terms employed in most arguments of this nature (e.g., "phantasms", "preternatural modes of knowledge", "internal senses" and so on) convey little concrete meaning today, if they ever did.

this knowing of the greatness of her Maker, and the littleness of herself that is made, made her to say full meekly to Gabriel, "Lo me here, God's hand-maiden!" In this sight I understood truly that she is more worthiness and in fulness of grace than all that God made beneath her. (ch. 4, p. 52).

There are two important elements to Mary's response: first, her "wisdom" in understanding the magnitude of what is happening to her; second, the "truth" of her response, which is her humility and obedience. Mary's great grace is to be found precisely in her "littleness", in which she responds humbly to the Love of God. The lesson which Julian sees in Mary, in which Mary is a kind of model for prayer, recapitulates Julian's own experience of her vision moments before. Julian, on seeing the bleeding head of Christ, and the whole Trinity manifest in him (ch. 4), was surprised at the condescension of God in appearing to her; and she too, was moved to reverence:

Even so I conceived truly that it was himself, God and man, the same that suffered for me, who shewed it to me--without any intermediary.

In the same shewing, suddenly the Trinity filled full my heart with the utmost joy (thus I understood it shall be in heaven without end unto all that come thither)...And I said: "Lord, bless us!" This I said with reverence for my meaning, in a mighty voice. For I was truly astounded by the wonder and the marvel, that he who is so reverend and dreadful should be so homely with a sinful creature still living in this wretched flesh. (ch. 4, p. 51).

Both Mary's experience of the annunciation, and--to a smaller degree--Julian's vision of the Trinity in Christ, point to what Julian calls the "homely loving" of God. This is the Love which brings God to ordinary human beings; his "homeliness", such that human beings are able to respond in joy rather than, for example, with terror. Immediately following her description of the vision of Mary, she describes her understanding of God's "homeliness" in revelation:

In the same time that I saw this sight of his head bleeding, our good Lord shewed a ghostly sight of his homely loving. I saw that

he is to us everything that is good and strengthening for our help. He is our clothing that, for love, wrappeth us up and windeth us about; embraceth us, all becloseth us and hangeth about us, for tender love; so that he can never leave us. And so, in this sight, I saw that he is to us everything that is good, as I understand it. (ch. 5, p. 52).

Subsequently Julian sees the "hazelnut" in her hand, and learns that all that happens, happens by the Love of God. This "homely" love is, for her, what makes prayer possible. First, she experiences God's love in her own vision; then she sees this Love stooping to Mary's "littleness", to be born of her; and finally, she sees that God's Love encloses us entirely, and that God is, himself, all that is good for us. In her First Revelation this is emphasized again:

For he is very rest. It is his will to be known and it is his pleasure that we rest us in him. All that is beneath him sufficeth not to us. (ch. 5, p. 53).

Taking these elements of her vision together, she recognizes that we can pray to God because God is "homely" with us first, in revelation and in the incarnation; and that we must pray to God, because God is the only source of all that we need. An important principle is established here for Julian's theology as a whole: that whatever prayer we offer to God is not demanded by God, in the sense of a command placed upon us to satisfy God; but that it is demanded by our dependence upon God, in our own being--and that it is for our own peace of mind, and for our own joy, just as it is for God's pleasure. In Mary's response, Julian sees that we can speak to God freely, in love, because God has already given himself to us.

Earlier we noted that the Revelations treats prayer specifically in chapters 41-43, as Julian describes part of her teaching in the Fourteenth Revelation. This particular "shewing" of prayer grows out of a more general vision

of the Love which God has for us, in our condition of sin and guilt; and its point is that we may approach God in prayer (and indeed, that we must do so) freely, like a child speaking to its mother. However, she depicts this theme throughout the Revelations, often without indicating very clearly that she is thinking specifically of prayer. In what follows we shall outline her development of the theme of prayer very briefly, bearing in mind that prayer underlies whatever she says, and can only be touched upon in our thoughts here.

A) "Kind Yearning": The Prayer of Petition

Julian's first kind of prayer may, for convenience, be thought of as the prayer of petition--or in her English, the prayer of "beseeching". It is not petition as we ordinarily think of it, however, because Julian sees even the simplest prayer, in which we ask God for our daily needs, as involving much more than asking God for things. Any kind of prayer, for Julian, is a movement of man to God, following the "touching" of the Holy Spirit. Prayer is essentially a response to God; therefore it is a kind of "oneing" to God, regardless of its nature, and is the work of the Holy Spirit in us. She will depict every prayer of petition as essentially a prayer for God (regardless of what we actually ask), because prayer stems from a deep need in the soul to be in communion with God, who is the source of all things. When we pray for our needs, or for rest, or for anything whatever, we are really asking to be satisfied by God, who is our true rest. Therefore we shall think of her first kind of prayer as a desire for God, which she calls "kind yearning".

We saw earlier that "kind" in Julian's usage refers both to nature and to kindliness. In the phrase "kind yearning", which first occurs in chapter 5 of the Revelations, she uses "kind" primarily to mean "natural": there is a

natural "yearning", or desire, for God.²² However, she explains that this "natural" desire comes about by the Holy Spirit, at work in the soul. Further, what she describes as "yearning" actually means more than conscious "longing" or desire. It refers to a deep need--something which is true even when it goes unrecognized. In order to understand her concept of "kind yearning", which is expressed in the prayer of petition, we need to follow her thoughts from her First Revelation, in which she is taught for the first time about the nature of prayer.

We have seen that in the First Revelation Julian learned that God is all that is good for the soul. It follows that if God is all that is good for us, then our needs are not only met by God, but the object of our need is God himself. God desires, in fact, what we should ask for nothing less:

And also our good Lord shewed that it is the greatest pleasure to him that a simple soul come to him nakedly, plainly and homely. This is the kind yearning of the soul, through the touching of the Holy Ghost, as I am given to understand by this shewing:

God, of thy goodness, give me thyself; for thou art enough to me, and I can nothing ask that is less that would be full worship of thee. And if I ask anything that is less, ever me wanteth; for in thee only have I all.

These words, though the goodness of God, are full lovesome to the soul; and full near touch the will of our Lord. (ch. 5, p. 54).

If we look carefully at Julian's words, we see that at this point she actually breaks off into prayer: "God, of thy goodness, give to me thyself..." Although she is about to describe a "shewing" which has been given to her, she gives us, instead, a prayer which she says to God. It is possible that in dictating this passage to her scribe, Julian found herself praying--moving into prayer where a description of prayer would not be adequate to express what she

22 The immediate context of this phrase does not appear at all in Clifton Wolters' edition of the Revelations.

felt at the moment. The scribe wrote down her prayer, along with her comments afterwards: "These words, through the goodness of God..." There is no doubt, in any case, that her prayer itself came "through the goodness of God": she felt that her prayer was given to her, by the Spirit. Significantly, her first insight about the nature of prayer is therefore that we ought to pray for God himself, which insight comes in prayer.

It is astounding that Julian's first discussion of prayer includes a prayer for God himself, and that she goes on to describe all petitions in this light. Students of the Revelations have recognized that this prayer is what is commonly known as "infused" or "unitive" prayer, reflecting an intimate communion with God--perhaps what, in medieval mystical theology, would be the highest state, of spiritual marriage or mystical union. If not, it is a state just prior to union, in which the soul is longing deeply for perfect "oneing". The problem, then, is why this prayer occurs so early in the Revelations, rather than, say, at the end, as in other mystical treatises on prayer.²³ That Julian passes into this kind of prayer so easily, and describes it readily, has been taken as evidence that she was far advanced in contemplative prayer already, at the time of her visions; or that, at the time of her writing (twenty years after the visions) she was accustomed to an intimate form of prayer as the fruit of her contemplative experience.

The content of Julian's early chapters makes it unlikely either that Julian was far advanced in so-called "unitive" prayer at the time of her visions;

23 Compare The Scale, which begins its discussion of contemplative prayer in Book II, ch. 21, the final stage of the spiritual "journey". See also Richard Rolle's The Fire of Love, ch. II: "That No Man May Suddenly Come to High Devotion, Nor Be Wet With the Sweetness of Contemplation" (Rolle, R., The Fire of Love and The Mending of Life, trans. Frances Comper, Methuen and Co., London, 1914, p. 16).

or that she does not mean to describe something which occurred in the visions themselves, but only something which she experienced much later in life. First, Julian is not a "proficient" at the time of her visions, because she tells us that she was surprised to learn rather simple things. A proficient would already know, for example, that God "is very rest"; or that to pray for union with God is to "full near touch the will of our Lord". Second, Julian is explicitly describing her first "shewing". No doubt her description is coloured by her later experience; but Julian means to tell us that from the beginning, she saw the nature of prayer as a free approach to God, to ask him for the gift of himself. Julian learns immediately, in the vision of the bleeding head, that God's love is "homely"; that he has given himself to us already; and that all our prayer comes from him, and is essentially a prayer for God himself.

Now we may think, for a moment, about what was said earlier (in the last chapter) concerning the relationship between "kind" (=nature), and mercy and grace. Julian, we said, depicts the work of the Spirit as in, and with, nature. Whatever happens around us naturally, springs from God: there is no question of God "intervening" in nature, because there is no nature apart from the constant working of the Spirit. We recall, too, that the work of the Spirit is essentially the work of the Father, who sends the Spirit: "kind" usually implies, for Julian, the Love of the Father, who made nature and "keeps" it. Bearing these things in mind, we turn to Julian's concept of prayer as springing from our nature--a "kind" yearning. Julian sees that we pray when we have needs--that is, because our own nature requires things. But if nature itself springs from God, then it is clear that "natural" needs are, too, the work of God. Within the context of our needs, it is the Spirit who prompts us to turn to the source of our fulfilment. In this sense, then, every prayer of petition--

even the simplest one--comes from God and is returned to him.

In Chapter 6 Julian develops one of the more important implications of her vision of "homely" prayer, as it presented itself to her for her own times. Julian sees that to come to God "nakedly, plainly and homely" means praying spontaneously, and directly, to God. In this sense there are no prerequisites for prayer, to make our prayer acceptable. If prayer itself comes from God, there is nothing to prevent us from approaching God ourselves, without any intermediary except God himself, in Christ. Thus Julian gently discourages a common practice of her time, that of praying by "means".

To pray by a "means" meant to invoke, before God, something holy--a relic, or a saint, or an important event, like the crucifixion.²⁴ Julian does not suggest that to recall a "means" before God is in any sense bad: one might speak, in prayer, of the cross, or of the blood of Christ which was shed for our sins, or of the service of a saint or martyr to God. But she does say that none of these things makes our prayer acceptable before God; and nothing comes from the cross (for example) that does not really come from God's Love itself:

We pray to God by his holy flesh, by his precious blood, his holy passion, his most dear death and worshipful wounds. But all the blessed kindness and endless life that we have because of all this--it is of the goodness of God. (ch. 6, p. 55).

There is no need to think that she has in mind a crude form of prayer, as if things like the cross were invoked in a magical way (though no doubt some simple people prayed this way, as she well knew). Part of the anchoress's daily office included the cruces, or prayers of the cross--which prayers are

²⁴ Cf. Anselm's "Prayer to the Holy Cross" (Ward, op. cit., p. 102), and Sr. Benedicta Ward's discussion of medieval devotion to the crucifix in the same volume, pp. 32 ff.

very beautiful indeed.²⁵ They were not, of course, prayers to the cross, although sometimes the cross is personified and addressed, but prayers which remind the worshipper (and, presumably, God) of what God has done on the cross. Even so, she suggests that this kind of prayer can be harmful when it suggests that God loves us only because of the cross, or only because of the saint whom we have invoked. Here she is concerned, in fact, with the whole concept of grace, as she understood it prior to her visions.

Prayer, says Julian, is never answered merely because of the words that we have said or because of the "means" that we invoke. To put this another way, there is no "grace" or merit in any created thing, or event, or even any saint, by which our prayers are answered. "Grace" does not reside in the blood of Christ, for example, but in his Love. "Grace", in fact, is God, the Holy Spirit. Therefore we do not need to pray by the merit or "grace" of Christ's blood, but simply by the love of Christ for us. Ultimately, God answers our prayers because he loves us--and not the things we might invoke. Even prayers through the Mother of God are answered not merely because of the Lord's great love for her, but because of his love for us who pray. This is proved by the incarnation itself: Mary symbolizes our access to God, not because of her own merit, but because in her, God has given himself to mankind; and in her we see the true response to that gift:

And we pray him by the sweet love of the Mother that bore him; but all the help that we have because of her--it is of his goodness. And we pray by his holy cross on which he died; but all the help and all the power that we have because of that cross--it is of his goodness. And in the same wise, all the help that we have of special saints, and of all the blessed company of heaven, the very dear love and holy endless

25 Ancrene Riwe, Part I (Riwe, p. 14). See also the translator's note, p. 194.

friendship that we have of them--it is of his goodness. The means that the goodness of God hath ordained to help us are full fair and many; of which the chief and most eminent means is the blessed kind [nature] which he took of the Maiden, along with all the means, belonging to our redemption and to our endless salvation, which went before and come after.

Wherefore it pleaseth him that we seek him and worship him by these means, but understanding and knowing that he is the goodness of them all. For the highest prayer is to the goodness of God which cometh down to us, to the lowest part of our need. (ch. 6, p. 55).

Julian's understanding of prayer in light of Mary is significant, and remarkable for her time. She sees that the importance of Mary is not merely Mary's intercession on our behalf, but the fact that in Mary we can see how prayer is possible at all--the chief "means" of our prayer being nothing less than the humanity of Christ, which brings our human nature into full communion with God. Again, the "means" by which God heals us are not repositories of grace as it were, but are examples of God's homely love for us. An implication of Julian's insight here is that, in some sense, the Virgin is always "present" to us when we pray: we cannot pray without praying with the Virgin, because she is the supreme example of prayer, and in her prayer becomes truly possible. On the other hand, we do not pray through Mary, but through the Son whom she bore, and whose own nature makes our prayers possible, in his Love.

It is worthwhile to note Julian's continuation of the theme of prayer as it is depicted in Mary, and of its significance. Julian stresses the love-relationship between the Son and the Virgin, which relationship we are meant to share. In the Eleventh Revelation, Julian asks to see the Virgin again--to see Mary's love for her Son. Jesus answers in such a way that Julian's understanding of Mary shifts, from an emphasis on Mary's "grace" to an understanding of the inclusion of all Christians into her relationship with the Son:

His countenance full of this mirth and joy, our Lord looked down on the right side and brought to my mind our Lady, and where she stood

during the time of his passion; and said, "Wilt thou see her?" In this sweet word it was as if he had said:

I know well that thou wilt see my blessed Mother; for after myself she is the highest joy that I might shew thee; she is the most liking and worship to me, and of all my blessed creatures sight of her is most desired.

Out of the marvellous high and special love that he hath for this sweet maiden his blessed Mother, our Lady Saint Mary, he sheweth her bliss and her joy--such is the meaning of this sweet word. It was as if he said, "Wilt thou see how I love her so that thou mightest joy with me in the love that I have in her, and she in me?"

This sweet word our good Lord speaketh in love to all mankind that shall be saved (for our greater understanding) as it were to one person. It is as if he said: "Wilt thou see in her how thou art loved? For thy love I have made her so high, so noble and so worthy. This liketh me, and so will I that it do thee. (ch. 25, p. 88).

The suggestion that all Christians are included in the Son's delight, and joyful love, for his Mother, is a bold one, corresponding to Julian's suggestion that in petition we ought to ask for God to give us himself (ch. 5). Julian is saying that even ordinary folk, her "even-christians", may pray--and should pray--for union with God. She further argues that there is no prerequisite for this kind of prayer except our need itself, which is part of our human frailty (our "kind yearning"). Even more boldly, Julian says, finally, that Mary's own grace in the incarnation is for our sakes ("For thy love I have made her so high..."). Supremely, then, Jesus is our Lover; and we are meant to respond boldly to his love. At the close of her description of the First Revelation, Julian clearly spells out the nature of our prayer, in the knowledge of God's love for us:

And therefore we may ask our Lover all what we will; for our kindly will is to have God, and the good will of God is to have us. Nor may we ever cease willing or loving, until we have him in fullness of joy. And then we may no more will. It is his will that we be occupied in knowing and loving until the time come that we be full filled in heaven; therefore was this lesson shewed, as ye shall see. (ch. 6, p. 56).

At this point, Julian has not yet described another kind of longing in

which there is a "thirst" for God prompted by the Spirit. This will be the third "wound" for which she prayed, of "true longing for God". For the moment, she is concerned with the ordinary situation of need, when we pray for what we "will", i.e., when we have need. In this context, she makes the rather unusual but vivid point (which we noted earlier) that God meets our needs even at their lowest level--as, for example, in the process of elimination (ch. 6).²⁶

It would seem, at first reading, that her idea of petition--as a free request for "all that we will"--has gone too far. The assumption appears to be that the soul is conscious of desiring only God, or prays only for the things that God wills to grant. We might expect, at least, for her to qualify her statement somehow, perhaps to say that we may ask God for whatever we want, provided that it is according to his will.

We should remember, however, that Julian's Revelations is always addressed to those who would be "Christ's lovers", the "souls-to-be-saved". She assumes, therefore, that we pray to our Lover: there is no question of praying without meaning our words, for example, because by praying at all we have consciously turned to God. Furthermore, as we have seen, our natural need really is for God--we must "have" him, if we are to find rest. Thus she does not hesitate to say that "we" will to have God, just as he wills to have us.

Later, Julian does in fact qualify her statement on petition, with reference to how our prayers are answered:

To still more understanding / "for my greater understanding", C.W.7 was said this blessed word, "Lo how I love thee". As if he had said:
Behold and see that I loved thee so much (before ever I died for thee) that I would die for thee. And now I have died for thee, and have suffered as willingly as I may. And now is all my

26 See above, p. 225 .

bitter pain and all my hard travail turned to my everlasting joy and bliss. And as to thee, how should it now be that thou shouldst anything pray me that pleaseth me, and I should not full gladly grant it to thee? For my pleasure is thy holiness and thine endless joy and bliss with me. (ch. 24, p. 87. Emphasis added).

In this passage, as elsewhere, she does not say that it is impossible for a Christian to pray for things which do not please God. Her argument, rather, is that whenever we feel the need to approach God at all, we ought to pray freely as we feel the need. Her reference is to our own attitude to prayer, which ought always to be the same: that we ask boldly for God himself, and pray unafraid, and with joy. The qualification does not come in our way of prayer, which can be "homely"--like a child speaking to its Mother--but in the way in which our prayers are answered. Even in this, we can be sure that our that our prayer is always answered according to what is best for us, in God's Love.

The subject of prayer as petition is not specifically raised again until the Fourteenth Revelation, towards the middle of the book (ch. 41). The immediate context is, once again, a vision of the steadfast Love of God. Prayer is only one subject of this lengthy and complex "shewing", in which the problems of sin and forgiveness form the major part. However, an important theme is that prayer is a means by which we come into communion ("oneing") with God, both through our own needs and by the special prompting of the Spirit, who turns us to prayer.

First, Julian recapitulates the idea that God keeps us by his love, even in our sin. On the basis of what we have already seen, we would expect her to say, as before, that there are no conditions for prayer--i.e., that prayer is meant to be free and unselfconscious. Surprisingly, she does not say this--not,

at least, on the first reading:

After this, our Lord shewed me concerning prayer. In this shewing I saw two conditions for prayer--as our Lord understandeth it; one is rightfulness, the other is sure trust. (ch. 41, p. 113).

It would appear that she has qualified her concept of prayer here, to say that before our prayers are acceptable we must do two things: pray rightly, and have sufficient faith. She does not explain what she means by "rightfulness", whether praying for the right things, or praying in the right manner, or (perhaps) leading a "rightful" life in general. Her reference to "sure trust", on the other hand, seems clear. If we read on, however, we see that she is not discussing "conditions" for prayer in the sense of prerequisites, to make our prayer legitimate. Rather, she has in mind the proper "conditions" under which we ought to pray--the things which God desires for us, when we pray, not to make our prayer legitimate, but to benefit us fully. His desire is that we pray without anxiety, trusting in him to answer our needs:

For oftentimes our trust is not full; we are not sure that God heareth us, because (so we imagine) of our unworthiness, and the fact that we feel nothing at all--for we are as barren and as dry oftentimes after our prayers as we were before. Thus, in our feelings and in our folly is the cause of this weakness of ours; and this is my own experience. (ch. 41, p. 113).

Next, she argues that the "conditions" of prayer are met, in fact, by God himself. The "rightfulness" of our prayer involves adapting our will to God's will; but this is accomplished by the Spirit, who guides our prayers. Our prayers are acceptable to God already, because we are acceptable to God in his "homely" love for us. The condition of "sure trust" can be met by us because it has already been met for us--in God's mercy and grace. She depicts the delight which God has in our "beseeching", because he prompts it:

All this our Lord brought to my mind at once, and shewed these words:
I am the ground of thy beseeching. First, it is my will that

thou have it--and seeing that I make thee to desire it, and seeing that I make thee to beseech it and thou beseechest it, how could it then be that thou shouldst not have thy beseeching?

Thus in the first reason, with the three that follow, our Lord shewed a mighty comfort, as may be seen in these same words. In the first reason, where he saith "and thou beseechest it", he there sheweth the exceeding pleasure and endless reward that he willeth to give us for our beseeching. And the sixth reason (where he says "How could it then be?") was given as an impossibility. For nothing is more impossible than that we should seek mercy and grace, and not have it. (ch. 41, pp. 113-114).

Slight problems in the text have made this passage appear somewhat more difficult than it needs to be. It is not clear, for example, what Julian means by "that thou have it", in the first paragraph quoted above. Clifton Wolters renders the passage as follows:

In the first place my will is that you should pray, and then I make it your will too, and since it is I who make you to pray, and you do so pray, how can you not have what you ask for? (C.W., p. 124).

At least one writer has taken Julian to mean "that thou have beseeching", i.e., the special "unitive" prayer for God.²⁷ In this interpretation, the prayer itself is seen as the object of our desire, understanding contemplative prayer to be a special gift of the Spirit. However, it seems more likely that Julian is referring to the object of prayer: it is God's will that we have something in particular, which thing he makes us to desire, and then he grants it to us. Possibly, Julian thought to have made a more explicit identification between the object of prayer, and "mercy and grace"--the things for which we ought to pray. She does this further along, in the same passage ("...nothing is more impossible than that we should seek mercy and grace, and not have it") and also

27 Molinari, op. cit., pp. 104 ff.

in the following chapter:²⁸

...this is our Lord's will--that our prayer and our trust be alike, large. For if we do not trust as much as we pray, we fail in full worship to our Lord in our prayer; and also we hinder and hurt ourselves. The reason is that we do not know truly that our Lord is the ground from whom our prayer springeth; nor do we know that it is given us by his grace and his love. If we knew this, it would make us trust to have of our Lord's gift all that we desire. For I am sure that no man asketh mercy and grace with sincerity, without mercy and grace being given to him first. (ch. 42, p. 116. Emphasis added)

The problem is resolved, however, if we understand "mercy and grace" to be at work any time God grants anything at all to us, in prayer. To seek anything at all is to seek "mercy and grace", because it is by God's mercy and by his grace that we have anything. Furthermore, we have seen that for Julian, any petition is essentially a petition for God himself--that is, for his "mercy" and his "grace". We may recall, too, that "mercy" usually indicates for Julian the work of Christ in restoring humanity--that is, the incarnation itself (our "kind")--in which God comes down to the level of our need. "Grace", in the Revelations, also has the specific connotation of the work of the Spirit, in realizing "mercy" in our lives. She argues that nature ("kind"), mercy and grace are inseparable works of God (ch. 59). Therefore to ask for anything at all is to ask for God's mercy, his "homely love" which is given in Christ; which petition it would be impossible for God not to grant, since it has been granted already.

In her reference to the "sixth reason" (ch. 41, second paragraph, above) we have what appears to be a scribal error either for "second reason" (replacing ii for vi) or "fourth reason" (replacing iv with vi). The Wolters edition,

28 The quotation is possibly a reference to Matthew 7:10 ff. and its parallel, Luke 11:9 ff. Luke specifically indicates that the prayer for the Holy Spirit (which Julian identifies with "grace") will be answered.

as we have seen, reads "second". This is confusing, however, because Julian explicitly mentions four points: "in the first reason, with the three that follow". Thus it seems more likely that Julian actually said "fourth", and the scribe's original iv was altered at an early date.²⁹ If this is the case, her argument simply runs as follows: 1) God makes the soul-to-be-saved to desire (i.e., the fulfilment of our needs, which is to say the "mercy" and "grace" of God); 2) God prompts us to ask for our needs; 3) we do in fact ask for them; 4) It is an impossibility (therefore) for God not to fulfill our needs.

Through chapters 41-43, she argues that prayer is the occasion in which our soul, or will, conforms to the will of God:

Beseeching is a true grace-giving, lasting will of the soul which is oned and fastened to the will of our Lord, by the sweet and secret working of the Holy Ghost. (ch. 41, p. 114).

This may be taken to mean that in prayer itself (and not merely as a reward for prayer) the will is turned to God in a lasting way, such that we deliberately ask for God's grace, and the working of his will. Once again, Julian has been understood here to refer specifically to a special kind of prayer, in which one who is fairly advanced in contemplative prayer asks for "union" with

29 Evidently the manuscripts agree in reading "vite". The passage reads as follows in Sr. Reynold's critical edition of the text:

And thus in the furst reson with the thre that followe our goode Lorde sheweth a mighty comfort as it may be sene in the same words in the furst reson there he seyeth^e And thou beseke it^e ther he shewyth full grett plesaunce and endlesse mede that he wylle geue vs^e for oure besekyng^e And in the .vj.^{te} reson there he seyth. How schulde it than be; this was seyde for an vnpossible thyng^e (AMR, p. 164)

It is curious that all published editions of the Longer Version translate either "second" or "sixth"; while the Shorter Version, in the parallel passage, reads "fourth" (SGL, p. 56). A similar confusion exists over the date of Julian's vision, recorded in Ch. 2. (see above, p. 1, n. 1).

God.³⁰ This assertion has always been made in spite of the fact that Julian does not use any of the usual technical language of her day for this way of prayer, perhaps on the grounds that Julian was unfamiliar with the language of the scholars, or deliberately avoids it in her text. It seems more likely, however, that once more she means simply that any kind of petition is the opportunity for our will to be conformed to the will of God--which conformation is brought about by the work of the Spirit. In the act of prayer itself, we become more and more conscious of God, and more and more desirous of his will. This, for Julian, is true even in the simplest prayer of petition.

In these chapters, and subsequently, she reiterates several times that to pray is already to work God's will; therefore it is to be "oned" to God. This "oneing" takes place on a conscious level, because the more we pray, the more we love God, and desire to work his will:

Prayer oneth the soul to God. For though the soul is ever like to God in kind, and like also in substance when restored by grace, it is often unlike to him in its condition, because of sin on man's part. But prayer is a witness that the soul willeth as God will-eth, it strengtheneth a man's conscious working, and enableth him to receive grace. And hence he teacheth us to pray and mightily to trust that we shall have it. For he beholdeth us in love, and willeth to make us partakers of his good will and deed. Therefore he moveth us

30 Molinari's argument is that because Julian speaks of "oneing" in prayer, she must be using the word "prayer" in a special sense:

This teaching is all briefly summed up in Julian's own words: 'And thus the soul by prayer accordeth to God' (ch. 43, p. 77); 'Prayer oneth the soul to God.' (ch. 43, p. 76). Therefore when Julian gives explicit teaching on 'prayer', this term has to be understood, not as petition of things, but in the precise and technical sense of 'unitive prayer' leading to the union of wills.

(Molinari, *op. cit.*, p. 98. Molinari's pagination refers to the Hudleston edition.)

The present writer takes exactly the opposite position, namely that Julian sees the possibility for "oneing" in any kind of petitionary prayer.

to pray for what it pleaseth him to do; and he willeth to reward us, and give us endless payment for the prayer and the good will that we have received of his gift. (ch. 43, p. 118)

Here she shows the psychological benefit of prayer for ourselves, which reflects what is happening in our being (in our relationship to God) when we pray. To pray is to move more and more into the intimacy of God's Love, God's being, because it is communion with God. This is reflected in our daily lives, above the fact that God grants us things in response to prayer: When we have prayed, and are satisfied that we have made our requests (or needs) known to God, we have in effect turned our lives over to God; we have freed ourselves from the burden of responsibility for what happens in our relationship to God. This in turn means that we can make decisions without anxiety, either about our ultimate relationship to God or about the things that we decide. In prayer, furthermore, God actually gives us insight about how to make decisions--how to live. She suggests, too, that to pray is to make ourselves conscious of imitating Christ in our lives, because we are aware that Christ's life is a life of prayer to the Father. In all these things, prayer "strengtheneth a man's conscious working, and enableth him to receive grace". At the same time, our condition--how we actually live--begins more and more (even in the act of prayer itself) to resemble our substance, our true humanity which we see in Jesus.

The voluntary nature of petition, or "beseeching", is important for Julian's understanding of "oneing", and should be noted carefully. "Oneing" centers in prayer because in prayer we dispose ourselves to God. It is clear from the whole of the Revelations that, for Julian, God is always able to act--and does act--in our lives regardless of our attitude towards God. But for there to be genuine "oneing" in love, we must desire for God to act: it

is the nature of love to want what the beloved wants. In his love, God wills for us what is best for us, and even makes us to desire it, so that God's will is really our will. Reciprocally, to love God is to will only his will for us. We might think that to consciously will God's will, however, is nearly impossible. How do we even know God's will? Julian's answer is one of her most important theological insights, which ought to be underlined in every Christian theology of prayer: To pray at all is to will God's will.

By definition, any form of petition at all is to request for God to act sovereignly, as God--because to pray is to recognize that we cannot act on our own. However we pray, therefore, we are essentially relinquishing our will for God's will. It was always the case, of course, that God's will is sovereign and that we cannot act as God acts, in his Being as God. But to pray is to recognize this fact, and to dispose our lives to God deliberately. It is at this point that a love-relationship begins to take hold in our lives, rather than a relationship of despair before God, or fear of God. To dispose ourselves to God, as Mary does at the annunciation, is to receive God in the way that he wills for us to receive him--in love and obedience, and therefore with joy and freedom. Julian is clear, too, that when we dispose ourselves to God's love, it is Christ whom we receive:

When we give our minds, by the working of mercy and grace, to love and meekness, we are made all fair and clean. As mighty and as wise as God is to save man, even so willing is he. For Christ himself is the ground of all the laws of Christian men; he it is who taught us to do good and not evil. Here we may see that he is himself this Charity; and he doeth to us as he teacheth us to do to others. For he willeth that we be like him in wholeness of endless love to ourselves and to our even-christians. (ch. 40, p. 113).

It should be clear in what we have just seen, that for Julian to pray is never to change God's will--which is always the same, in his Love--but to

conform our will to God's. She goes on to state explicitly that prayer is such a conformation, of ourselves to the Love which is God:

I know well that the more the soul seeth of God, the more she desireth him, by grace. But when we see him not so, then feel we need and cause to pray, because of our weakness and the unreadiness of ourselves to receive Jesus. For when a soul is tempested, troubled and left to herself because of her unrest, then it is time to pray, that she may make herself supple and docile, so as to receive God. (For by no manner of prayer can she make God supple to receive her: he is ever one and the same in his love.) (ch. 43, p. 119).

One way in which our will is conformed to God's will--or of our selves to God--is in the stance of "beseeching" itself: petition, by its nature, is an act of humility, which resembles the life of Christ. Another way in which prayer works to conform us to God is in the apparent failure of our prayers to be answered. She has argued that we should pray trustingly, knowing that God will grant what we need; and that we should freely ask for whatever we will. However, there are times when we pray, and find that God does not grant what we ask. At these times, we ought to trust that God has provided for us in a better way than we were able to ask of him:

Sometimes it cometh to our mind that we have prayed a long time, and yet, seemingly, we have not received an answer. We should not be grieved on this account, but--and I am sure of this in our Lord's meaning--we merely await a better time, a greater grace, or a better gift. He willeth us to have true knowing of him--that he is all-being. In this knowing he willeth that our understanding be grounded, with all our power and all our intent and all our meaning. In this ground he willeth that we take up our station and our dwelling. (ch. 42, p. 116).

She implies that there ought to be no disappointment in true prayer--that is, when we are in a right relationship to God, approaching him freely in love--because the whole nature of this kind of petition is to ask the beloved to do what is best. This would be true of our petition even if we asked God to do what we wanted him to do, because God cannot be anything other than himself--

he cannot respond except as God, in infinite Love. To tell God what to do, however, would be to open ourselves to bitterness and to disappointment--like a child telling his mother what he wants to do, but having to learn, in the end, that he is still the child, and unable to take care of himself. The purpose of petition, to the contrary, is to free us to live without anxiety: to bring our needs to God, and to be aware that he can, and does, answer them, even by the gift of himself to us.

In summary, Julian tells us that there are three things we ought to understand about petition: that God is the source of our prayers; that the function of prayer is to give us joy; and that by praying, we are being conformed to the image of God, who is Jesus:

The first is to know by whom and how our prayer beginneth. By whom, he sheweth when he saith "I am the ground": and how, by his goodness: for he saith, "First, it is my will." The second is to know in what manner and how we should use our time of prayer; this is, that our will be turned to the will of our Lord in joy. This is his meaning when he saith "I make thee to will it". The third is to know the fruit and end of our prayer; which is to be oned and like to our Lord in everything. To this meaning and to this end was all this lovely lesson shewed. He will help us, and he shall bring it about, as he says himself, blessed may he be! (ch. 42, p. 116).

In petition, the most common form of prayer for anyone, the soul is turned toward God and is conformed to God's likeness. When we ask for things, we do not change God's will, but our will is changed to be like his--which makes for joy in us, and freedom from anxiety. All our prayer comes from God, and returns to him, in his love. In our "kind yearning", it is God for whom we long, because he is the source of rest and of all our needs. Petition, then, is turning to God our Father--to the Lord Jesus, who is like our Mother--for our needs; and in turning to him, in the power of the Spirit, it is Jesus whom we receive:

I it am: the might and the goodness of Fatherhood. I it am: the wisdom and the kindness of Motherhood. I it am: the light and the grace that is all blessed love. I it am, the Trinity. I it am, the Unity. I it am the high sovereign Goodness of all manner thing. I it am that maketh thee to love. I it am that maketh thee to long. I it am, the endless fulfilling of all true desires. (ch. 59, p. 161)

B) "Beholding": The Prayer of Contemplation

The second kind of prayer which Julian describes is "beholding", which we may think of as contemplation or "contemplative prayer". More precisely, she uses "beholding" to mean a particular kind of contemplation, which is sometimes called theoria in Christian spirituality. In its context, theoria usually means to gaze upon the person of Christ, or his face, rather in the way that Julian looked upon the crucifix throughout the whole of her sixteen Revelations.³¹ Obviously, by "beholding" she does not mean the literal

31 From Gk. theoreō, usually translated "behold" (i.e., to gaze upon). For an explanation of the Orthodox understanding of theoria historically see Lossky, Vladimir, The Vision of God, The Faith Press, Wisconsin, 1963, ch. 2 and passim.

In general, Julian's explanation of prayer in the Revelations is strikingly similar to Orthodox spirituality, in which prayer always implies "beholding", or "taking one's stand before God", and is understood as involving the particular stages or movements which Julian describes, in petition, "beholding" and thanksgiving. Compare Julian's concept of "beholding" as it is discussed in the following pages, with this Orthodox account of "inner prayer":

Inner prayer means standing with the mind in the heart before God, either simply living in His presence, or expressing supplication, thanksgiving, and glorification. We must acquire the habit of always being in communion with God, without any image, any process of reasoning, any perceptible movement of thought. Such is the true expression of prayer. The essence of inner prayer, or standing before God with the mind in the heart, consists precisely in this.

Inner prayer consists of two states, one strenuous, when man himself strives for it, and the other self-impelled, when prayer exists and acts on its own. This last happens when we are drawn along involuntarily, but the first must be a constant

contemplation of a crucifix, although in practice it might be desired (in the way that the Orthodox use icons to direct their attention to Jesus, in prayer). Rather, she is thinking of turning our soul, or our whole selves, towards God in such a way that we are completely undistracted by anything else, including ourselves. To do this is to "look" upon Christ, because the only way in which God makes himself personally known to us, in Julian's thought, is in the person of Christ.

The prayer of "beholding" is a deepening of the "oneing" which we experience in ordinary petition. We saw that, for Julian, to ask God to meet our needs is really to ask for God himself, and gradually to find our will at-one with his will. Therefore, although petition is prompted by God, it also begins in ourselves (for example, in thinking about our needs or the needs of others). In this sense, the movement of our thought in petition is from ourselves to God, who is the only source of our rest. "Beholding", on the other hand, begins in God--with our attention firmly fixed on him--and turns us to ourselves (seeing ourselves in God, and in light of him) and to the world around us, in his love. Petition leads to "beholding": once our attention is turned towards God in prayer, we are ready to experience the kind of grace which comes simply in looking upon the Lord. This is the "disposition" of the

object of endeavor. Although in itself such endeavor will not be successful because our thoughts are always being dispersed, yet as proof of our desire and effort to attain to unceasing prayer, it will attract the mercy of the Lord; and because of this work God fills our heart from time to time with that compelling impulse through which spiritual prayer reveals itself in its true form. (Kadloubovsky, E. and E. M. Palmer, trans., The Art of Prayer: An Orthodox Anthology, Faber and Faber, London, 1966, p. 71).

For further references to Orthodox contemplative prayer, see the Bibliography below.

soul which makes us ready ("supple" or "docile", as Julian says) to receive God.

Earlier we said that for Julian, to turn to God is to be conformed to him, in that we deliberately will for God to act--we will his will. In the prayer of "beholding" this conformation becomes more concrete. Julian suggests throughout the Revelations that to look upon Christ is to be conformed to his likeness, because of the work of the Spirit who is given by Christ. "Mercy" gives way to "grace": to look to Jesus is to be made one with him. Therefore she is able to say that in contemplative prayer we become like Christ:³²

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- 32 A similar passage may be found in ch. IX of "The Sparkling Stone" by Jan van Ruysbroeck, the Flemish writer who was roughly Julian's contemporary (d. 1381):

So soon as we have faith, hope and charity, we have received God, and He dwells in us with His grace, and He sends us out as His faithful servants, to keep His commandments...For when we go out in love beyond and above all things, and die to all observation in ignorance and in darkness, then we are wrought and transformed through the Eternal Word, Who is the Image of the Father. In this idleness of our spirit, we receive the Incomprehensible Light, which enwraps us and penetrates us, as the air is penetrated by the light of the sun. And this Light is nothing else than a fathomless staring ["beholding"] and seeing. What we are, that we behold; and what we behold, that we are: for our thought, our life, and our being are uplifted in simplicity, and made one with the Truth which is God. And therefore in this simple staring we are one life and one spirit with God: and this I call a contemplative life. (John of Ruysbroeck: The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage, trans. C. A. Wynschenk Dom, John M. Watkins, London, 1951, p. 204).

The general idea is common to medieval mystics. Compare Pseudo-Dionysius in The Divine Names. ch. LX.6:

But the Sacred Writers tell us that the All-Transcendent God is in Himself unlike any being, but that He nevertheless bestows Divine Similitude upon those that turn to Him and strive to imitate those qualities which are beyond all definition and understanding. (Rolt, op. cit., p. 166).

And then our good Lord opened my ghostly eye, and shewed me my soul in the midst of my heart. I saw the soul, so large as it were an endless world, and also as it were a blessed kingdom. And by the appointments that I saw therein, I understood that it is a worshipful city. In the midst of that city is our Lord Jesus, true God and true man, comely of person and tall of stature, the greatest bishop, most awful king, Lord of highest honour. And I saw him arrayed in majesty and honour...

This was a delightful sight and a restful shewing, that is without end. And the beholding of this, while we are here, is full pleasant to God and full great speed to us. And the soul that thus beholdeth—the sight maketh it like to him that is beheld, and oneth it to him in rest and in peace, by his grace. (ch. 68, p. 178, 180. Emphasis added).

Although "beholding" grows out of petition, in this conformation of ourselves to God, it is altogether a different kind of prayer. For Julian, petition is essentially the time when we are talking to God. This kind of prayer can be voiced, and most of her words for petition suggest praying aloud. Petition is an activity, of "yearning", "asking", "desiring", "beseeching". Contemplative prayer, on the other hand, is the time when we are quiet before God learning from him. The language of contemplation, in the Revelations, has to do with sight, rather than with speech: "beholding", "seeking", "looking", "shewing". In this sense, she suggests that the prayer of "beholding" is not voiced, but is silent prayer. Even when there is activity on our part, it is a silent activity: "seeking" God and "waiting" for him. We may therefore think of the prayer of "beholding" as essentially passive, since the soul no longer busies itself with its own needs, but has given itself to God.

Julian develops her understanding of divine revelation within the context of her discussion of "beholding". In turning our hearts to "gaze" upon Jesus, as it were, two kinds of revelation take place. First, God shows himself to us in Christ. This may take the form of an extraordinary vision, as for example when she perceived the whole Trinity in the face of Jesus; or it may simply be the teaching of the Church, which turns our attention towards

God in Christ. Second, even though our attention remains fixed on God, there is a revelation of ourselves in God: we see ourselves in light of Christ, we see Christ dwelling in us (as in Julian's vision, above) and we see ourselves living in Christ.

As she understands it, we truly see ourselves only when we are looking at the person of Jesus. We said, in our discussion of "charity created", that for Julian, true humanity is depicted in Jesus' life. Here, too, we see the relationship which we have with God: the Father dwelling in the Son, and the Son in the Father. By looking to Christ, we see what God intends for us to be, and what in fact we are becoming, by his grace. At the same time, we see more clearly what we are not: we become more fully aware of the nature of sin. We shall see that, for Julian, faith is the recognition of Christ at work in us, even though we are in the state of sin--trusting him to conform us to himself, and being faithful to him in love. The opposite of "beholding", and consequently of faith itself, is to take our attention away from Christ--what he is doing in our lives, and who he is (our Maker, Keeper and Lover)--in order to look at ourselves. If we attempt to assess our own situation before God--to understand sin or guilt, for example, apart from the being of God in Christ--we tend to fall further into sin, rather than to move away from it. If we are conformed to Christ by looking to his Love, the reverse is true when we look away: to look at sin conforms us to sin, particularly as it leads us into despair, into obsession with guilt, into forgetfulness of God's mercy, and ultimately into doubting God's being itself, as the Love which is the Trinity.

We have seen that true petition is to bring our needs to God, trusting him to care for us in his Love. This kind of prayer becomes indistinguishable from the prayer of "beholding" when we gradually forget our needs and

concentrate on the Love of God which meets our needs. In beholding, petition is finally laid aside altogether, and we allow God to care for us without our asking, or even being aware of our needs at the moment of prayer.

In contemplative prayer, as one's attention is turned more and more to God, the soul passes through the experience of the three "wounds" of the Spirit for which Julian prayed: of contrition, compassion, and longing for God. All three are stimulated by a clear vision of Jesus, and therefore of what we ought to be. By seeing Jesus' purity, we are brought to contrition; by experiencing his love, we are brought to compassion; and finally, as we "lose" ourselves in Christ, by looking upon him, we long for him more and more. We shall see, however, that in the prayer of "beholding" none of the spiritual "wounds" is a purely private experience. To be truly contrite is to feel sorrow for all sin, in all men; to be compassionate is to love all men and all creation; and to long for God is to long for all things to be "oned" to him. This reflects, once more, a conformity with the Love which is the Trinity, because the nature of God's love is that it is ecstatic and not contained; communal, and not private.

As with petition, Julian's understanding of contemplative prayer begins immediately in her First Revelation. The first example of "beholding" in the Revelations is the moment in which she first turns her attention to the crucifix, following the instructions of her priest (ch. 3). She relates how she had not intended looking at the crucifix at all, preferring to think generally of God, and staring at the ceiling ("heavenward"):

My curate was sent for to be present at my end. Before he came, my eyes were fixed upwards, and I could not speak. He set the cross before my face, and said: "I have brought the image of thy Saviour; look thereupon, and comfort thee therewith." But I believed I was well enough; for my eyes were set upwards into heaven whither I

trusted to come by the mercy of God. Nevertheless, I consented to turn my eyes to confront the crucifix, if I could. And so I did. For I believed that I could endure longer looking straight forward than upwards. (ch. 3, p. 49).

That she turned to the crucifix almost unwillingly, out of obedience--or perhaps for the purely practical reason that it was easier than looking upwards--is significant. In this passage she expressly denies that she entered into contemplation deliberately, or with a pure will fixed on God. It is astounding that the passage occurs in a book like hers at all; and it does not fit the popular image of a saintly Julian who, languishing in her bed, turned her whole attention to her Lord Jesus. But she describes her hesitance here in order to make an important observation about the nature of contemplative prayer: that to turn to Christ in any degree at all is to be healed. She will say, again and again, that the more she saw Jesus, the more she desired to see him. She did not turn to him out of great desire, but his, own self-giving (in the visions, and in the teachings which she received) prompted the desire in her. She recognizes that if this is true for herself, the possibility for the joy of deep contemplative prayer is open to anyone--all her "even-christians", however hesitantly we might turn to God.

Earlier we observed that Julian's initial experience of prayer was given to her in the prayer for God himself which Julian took to be from the Holy Spirit. This prayer followed on her vision of the Trinity in Christ, in which she was astonished that she should receive a vision; and her vision of the "hazelnut" in her hand, illustrating God's homely love for the universe. A pattern is established here, in which prayer is seen to follow on God's gift of himself, rather than bringing it about. In "beholding" this pattern repeats, and is of the greatest importance. She establishes the absolute priority of God in our prayer: he wills for us to pray, and he brings prayer about

in us. In this sense we cannot "make" ourselves contemplatives. We can be "docile" before God, which receptivity itself comes about by the Spirit. In looking upon Christ, it is Christ himself who holds our attention and who creates the prayer of "beholding". She will present contrition and compassion in this light: we do not make Christ present for us by being contrite or by being compassionate, but contrition and compassion are created in us by the presence of Christ. She describes her reaction to the First Revelation, in which she was moved to contrition, compassion and longing for God (in her love for Christ) simply in "beholding" him. Seeing his face, she forgets about herself entirely--the mark of true "beholding":

And therefore we may ask our Lover all that we will; for our kindly will is to have God, and the good will of God is to have us...It is his will that we be occupied in knowing and loving until the time comes that we be full filled in heaven; therefore was this lesson of love shewed, as ye shall see. For the strength and ground of all was shewed in the first sight. For above all things, the beholding and the loving of the Maker maketh the soul to seem least in its own sight, and most filleth it with reverent dread and true meekness, and with plenty of charity towards its even-christians. (ch. 6, p. 56).

Julian's experience of "reverent dread" and of "meekness" mirrors the response which she sees in Mary, as we have already seen. Mary is, once more, the model for prayer--the prayer of "beholding", in which Mary offers herself completely to God, and sees herself only in light of him:

And to teach us thus, as I understand it, our good Lord shewed our Lady Saint Mary in that same time; that is, the high wisdom and truth that she had in the beholding of her Maker. This wisdom and truth made her to behold her God as so great, so high, so mighty and so good that the greatness and nobleness of this beholding her God filled her full of reverent dread. And with this, she saw herself as so little and so low, so simple and so poor in regard to her God, that this reverent dread filled her full of meekness. Thus--in this ground--she was filled full of grace and of all manner of virtues, and surpasseth all creatures. (ch. 7, p. 57).

Next, Julian describes how her initial vision deepened from a simple "seeing" into true "beholding", the contemplation of what she had seen:

All this our Lord shewed in the first sight, and gave me space and time to behold it. Then the bodily sight stinted; but the ghostly sight lived on in my understanding. And I abode with reverent dread, rejoicing in what I saw, and desiring, as much as I durst, to see more if it were his will, or the same sight for longer time. In all this I was much affected in charity towards my even-christians--that they might all see and know the same that I saw; for I would that it were a comfort to them. For all this sight was shewed to all, in general. (ch. 8, p. 60).

In this, as before, the initiative remains with God, who reveals himself to Julian and turns her experience into a deepening awareness of herself, in contrition, compassion and longing. We should note here once again that for her, contemplative prayer means looking to Christ, remaining passive in order to "behold" him. She therefore depicts "beholding" as different from "meditation", in the sense of self-reflection (in which the mind attempts to understand itself, or to make contact with God). For Julian, "beholding" is always to rest in the sight of God, to look upon him as she has done in her visions.³³ She is aware of the specifically Christocentric nature of contemplative prayer, as opposed to what we may ordinarily think of as meditation. If meditation tends to gaze "heavenwards" (as Julian did before her curate arrived), the prayer of "beholding" is to look specifically and only to the face of Jesus, in whom we see God.

Julian's Second Revelation depicts the deepening of "beholding" as Julian first experienced in, such that she began to long for God. She finds herself wanting to see more than she can see: the vision itself is not clear enough,

33 The term "meditation" is variously used in mystical theology, often with precise meaning as defined by the particular theologian. It is used here in a more general sense, simply to distinguish between mental activity (which might be closer to "philosophy"), and the kind of contemplative prayer which Julian describes, in which one looks upon God (in Christ) in mental "silence". See n. 31, above.

it seems, and in any case she wants it to remain. Her answer is that the depth of our "beholding" does not depend upon even our desire to see God, but upon God's wisdom, in revealing himself to us. The effect of this is to turn us even more strongly to God:

And after this I saw, with bodily sight, in the face of the crucifix that hung before me, and upon which I gazed continually, a part of his passion...This I saw bodily, but with difficulty and obscurely. I desired more bodily light so as to have seen more clearly. And I was answered in my reason: "If God willeth to shew thee more, he shall be thy light; thou needest none but him." For I saw him and sought him. (ch. 10, p. 62).

We have said that "beholding" is essentially a passive prayer, of seeing God. At the same time, there is a dimension of "beholding" which is our activity, albeit a quiet kind of activity, in prayer. She describes her growing desire to see God, stimulated by her vision of him; and she "sought" him even though she could see him already, in Jesus' face. On the one hand, this new "seeking" is clearly our desire for God; yet it is prompted by God and is the work of "grace" in us:

We are, here, so blind and so unwise that we can never seek God until the time that he of his goodness sheweth himself to us. And when we see something of him, graciously, then we are moved, by this same grace, to seek with a great desire to see him more blissfully. And thus I saw him and sought him; I had him and I wanted him. This is, and should be, our ordinary working in this life, as I see it. (ch. 10, p. 63).

Thus there are two movements within the prayer of "beholding": the contemplative prayer in which we "seek" God, having seen him already; and the wholly passive prayer of "beholding", in which our attention is held by God's Love,--in a clear vision of his Being. The latter becomes our prayer most dramatically in God's "shewings"--the times when God reveals himself to us intensely, as in Julian's vision itself. Both forms of prayer stem from God; however, the experience of seeing God clearly (like the "shewings") is more rare, and

is a special gift. This clear vision of God is so precious to Julian that she understands it to be the highest experience we can have on earth--an experience, at least, which we could not describe but which would keep us from any kind of harm:

...even were a man or woman there under the broad water, if he could have sight of God, even as God is--with a man continually--he would be safe in soul and body, and take no harm. And above and beyond this, he would have more solace and comfort than all this world can or may tell. It is his will that we believe that we see him continually, though it seemeth to us that the sight is but little. And in this belief, he maketh us to get ever more grace. For he will be seen, and he will be sought; he will be waited on and he will be trusted. (ch. 10, p. 63).

Although Julian herself has experienced sixteen "shewings" by the end of her Revelations, she does not view her "shewings" as the object of contemplation, or even as necessary in order to know God or to "behold" him. Ordinarily, we do not experience the clear vision of God which one has in divine revelation, but we find God through trusting him, seeking him and turning ourselves toward him. Therefore she sees the prayer of "beholding" as equally valuable, whether it is "seeking" or actually seeing God clearly, or supernaturally, in revelation:

...the continual seeking of the soul pleaseth God much. For it can so no more than seek, suffer and trust; and this is wrought, in every soul that hath it, by the Holy Ghost. But the clearness of the finding--that is of his special grace, whenever it is his will. The seeking with faith, hope and charity pleaseth our Lord; the finding pleaseth the soul and filleth it with joy. Thus was my understanding taught that seeking is as good as beholding during the time that he willeth to suffer the soul to be in travail. It is God's will that we seek unto the beholding of him; for by that shall he shew us himself, of his special grace whenever he will...(ch. 10, p. 64).

The "travail" to which she refers is this life, in which we experience suffering, and in which we do not see God clearly because of our sin--our "blindness" (ch. 10, quoted above). On the other hand, she emphasizes that

the prayer of "beholding" is possible for anyone; it is simply turning to Jesus in love, which grace comes through the Spirit. Every Christian--and not simply those who are cloistered in prayer, like Julian--ought to experience some degree of contemplative prayer, particularly in the desire to see God more clearly:

The seeking is common--every soul can have that, of his grace, and ought to have it: spiritual discernment and the teaching of Holy Church. (ch. 10, p. 65).

What Julian calls "spiritual discernment" is the recognition that Christ is at work in all things (his "mercy"); and that the Spirit, who turns us to God in Christ, is at work in us. Earlier in the same chapter, in her vision of the sea-bed (where she imagines one might walk without harm, if he had clear vision of God) Julian learns that God would have us discern his work in all things: "It is his will that we believe that we see him continually, though it seemeth to us that the sight is but little". Julian's insight is particularly significant for the lay-man, and bears repeating, as indeed she repeats herself through chapter 10. The prayer of "beholding" is not a special grace which is withheld from us unless we merit it, nor is it tied to our vocation, nor is it something which we achieve. Rather, it is the gift of the Spirit to the whole Church, in seeking God and in seeing God in Christ. Julian is able to say, then, that "seeking" and "seeing" are our chief prayer as Christians: "This is, and should be, our ordinary working in this life, as I see it. (ch. 10, p. 63).³⁴ She reiterates that God will show himself to us clearly in

³⁴ In the last century, carrying over into the present, there has been a controversy in Catholic theology regarding the nature of contemplative prayer, viz., whether it is to be understood as a special "grace" (to be identified with extraordinary phenomena, such as visions or locutions), or whether it is more generally available through discipline

the times that he chooses, for our own good; meantime the work of the Spirit is not always seen by us, though we know it in faith:

For it is his will that we know that he shall appear suddenly and blissfully to all his lovers. For his working is secret; but he willeth to be perceived, and his appearing shall be right sudden. He will be trusted, because he is full courteous and homely. Blessed may he be! (ch. 10, p. 65).

Julian does not make it clear whether the "sudden appearance" is the Day of Judgement, in which we attain to a clear sight of God in heaven; or whether she is actually thinking of something like her own vision, which came upon her suddenly and with great joy. In either case, her point is that we should not despair if, in our opinion, we do not have clear sight of God. We are simply meant to seek God in love, turning our attention to him, which in itself is the prayer of "beholding" and is to God's worship:

It is God's will that we seek unto the beholding of him; for by that shall he shew us himself, of his special grace whenever he will. And how a soul is to keep herself in the beholding of him, that he shall teach, himself--which is the most worship to him and most profit to the soul, and most cometh of meekness and the virtues, with the grace

and "ordinary or "cooperant" grace. The former view is often accompanied with the idea that any form of prayer understood as "mystical" (i.e., extraordinary) is to be avoided, on the assumption that only rare and privileged persons experience it--mystical prayer being, for the ordinary Christian, a dangerous occupation. An account of the controversy, with its somewhat complex arguments, is given in Butler, Western Mysticism, 2nd Edition, op. cit., pp. xxii ff.

The arguments as outlined by Butler do not appear to be exhaustive, as Butler notes. Julian would not seem to fit any of the "schools" of thought on this point, although of course she does not take up the argument in the Revelations. She does seem to stress that the "touchings" and "shewings" which she received were not achieved by her in any way; but that, on the other hand, true contemplative prayer (in "beholding") is meant to be our occupation in this life. Significantly, she does not refer to asceticism anywhere in her discussion of "beholding" (see especially ch. 10 of the Revelations), and she implies that the special experience of "seeing clearly", as perhaps in her visions, may be had by anyone who diligently seeks God.

and the leading of the Holy Ghost. For a soul that simply fasteneth himself to God with true trust, either in seeking or beholding--there is the most worship that he can do, as I see it. (ch. 10, p. 65).

In her summary of this Second Revelation, in which she particularly learns about contemplative prayer, she sees two kinds of contemplative prayer: seeking God, and beholding him. The "seeking" itself is a gift of God; and Julian sees three things that God would give us in this prayer:

The first is that we seek as earnestly and willingly, without sloth, as may be with his grace; and gladly and merrily, without unreasonable heaviness or vain sorrow. The second is that we wait on him steadfastly, for life's end; for it shall last but a while. The third is that we trust in him mightily, with full and true faith. For it is his will that we know that he shall appear suddenly and blissfully to all his lovers. For his working is secret; but he willeth to be perceived... (ch. 10, p. 65).

Her emphasis in this passage is on the value of contemplative prayer for us (i.e., it is not something which God demands for his own sake), and the fact that this prayer comes of God's own grace. She does not see a command for us to "behold" God, as if it would be possible to fulfill such a demand. Rather, she sees that God delights in our prayer because it is beneficial to us, giving us a share in his Love. How earnestly we seek God is, itself, measured by God's grace. Because this is true, we are able to behold him "gladly and merrily", anticipating the time when we shall see God face-to-face, without end.

The Third Revelation continues her theme of contemplative prayer. Here, Julian sees that we should judge our relationship to God not by looking to ourselves, but by looking to God in Christ. The immediate context of her teaching is her enquiry about sin, desiring to know its nature. She is unable to see sin, and God's answer is to show Julian himself, with the world in relation to him: she sees God as the midpoint of all things (ch. 11), at work in all things. The reason for this is to teach her to turn her attention, once more, to God's

love--and not to worry about that which she cannot see or which might be harmful. She learns that the human assessment of sin is "blind"; but God's sight is true, and his judgement is "easy and sweet":

This vision, then, was shewed to my understanding because it is our Lord's will to have the soul truly turned into the beholding of him, and of all his works as well; for they are full good. All his judgements are easy and sweet, and they bring to great ease the soul that is turned from the beholding of the blind judgement of man into the fair sweet judgement of our Lord God. (ch. 11, p. 67).

The Revelations which follow repeat the theme of "beholding", in which we are meant to look upon God's Love in Christ, rather than ourselves. Once more she observes that in her visions themselves, she was allowed time for contemplative prayer--to "behold", so that she might understand what she had seen:

Afterwards, before God shewed any words, he permitted me to behold in him, for a suitable time, all that I had seen and all the understanding that was therein, so far as the simpleness of my soul could take it. Then, without voice or opening of lips, he formed in my soul these words: "Herewith is the fiend overcome." This word our Lord said, meaning his blessed passion which he had just shewed. (ch. 13, p. 69).

The substance of her visions is that God has dealt with sin absolutely, in the cross; and that Julian's relationship to God is secure, in the indwelling Christ. In "beholding", Julian is therefore able to see herself, but only to see herself in Christ. Her soul is an endless city, in which Christ dwells; She is absolutely bound to Christ, who has taken humanity into himself; God's love is so great that nothing can separate Julian's soul from God (ch. 51, 68, 72, 81). Again, her experience of "beholding" reflects the "beholding" which is in God, the expression which she sees in Jesus' face:

With a glad countenance our good Lord looked into his side, and beheld with joy. And with his sweet looking he led forth the understanding of his creature through this same wound into his side. And there, within, he shewed a fair and delightful place, large enough for all mankind that shall be saved to rest there, in peace and in love. Therewith he brought to my mind the most dear blood and precious water which he let

pour out for love. In his sweet beholding he shewed his blessed heart cloven in two; and in his sweet enjoying he shewed to my understanding, in part, the blissful Godhead--as far forth as he would at that time, and strengthening the poor soul to understand, so to say, the endless love that was without beginning and is and shall be ever. For with this our good Lord said, most blissfully, "Lo how I love thee." As if he had said: "My darling behold and see thy Lord, thy God, that is thy Maker and thine endless joy; see thine own Brother, thy Saviour; my child, behold and see what liking and what bliss I have in thy salvation; and for love of me, rejoice with me." (ch. 24, p. 87).

Julian's vision of Jesus, beholding in his side his own endless Love, is extraordinary, and gives her great joy. At the same time, she learns once more that there is a "beholding" which is not the rare vision, or "shewing", but which comes in faith, through the teaching of the Church. To "behold" is to quietly understand what God has done for us, and does, in his Love--to see us as Jesus sees us, which is to understand the salvation which is to be had in him. Whether we "behold" Jesus through a vision, or in the teaching of the Church, the fruit of our "beholding" is the same: peace and love, in the heart of Jesus. In the Fourteenth Revelation, she recognizes both kinds of "beholding" in her own experience--seeing Jesus herself, clearly, and at the same time "seeing" him through the eyes of faith. The latter is a beholding which lasts, through the Spirit, when the "shewings" have vanished. Both kinds of "beholding" are complimentary, the clear vision, and the seeking in faith which we have in the Church:

Yet in all this time, from beginning to end, I had two kinds of beholding. One was in endless and constant love, with sureness of his keeping and of my blissful safety [here Julian describes her own Revelations of divine love]. The other was in the ordinary teaching of Holy Church, in which I was, from the first, formed and grounded; which it was my will to have in use and in understanding. And the beholding of this never left me. For by the shewing I was never moved nor led therefrom in one single point; rather had I therein teaching to love it and like it; for in it I could, with the help of our Lord and his grace, have increase of and be lifted up to more

heavenly knowing and higher loving. (ch. 46, p. 124).

We have already said that for Julian, to "behold" God in Christ is to open ourselves to greater and greater desire for God--since the vision of Jesus conforms us to him, and deepens our love for him. She experiences this throughout the Revelations, and comments on it more than once. The nature of "beholding" is such that, as we pray, we lose sight of everything except Jesus: She notes again that as she beheld Jesus she forgot her own needs, and even, in a sense, forgot to pray. The prayer of "beholding" is accomplished by God in us, so much so that we find ourselves absorbed into the vision of Christ. This is the highest experience of contemplative prayer:

But when our courteous Lord, of his special grace, sheweth himself to our soul, then we have what we desire; and we do not see, in that time, anything more to pray for. All our intent and all our might is set wholly upon this beholding of him. And this is a high and ineffable prayer, as I see it. For all the reason why we pray is oned into the sight and the beholding of him to whom we pray, with marvellous enjoyment and reverent dread, and such great sweetness and delight in him that we can pray not at all, or only as he moveth us to do at the time. I know well that the more the soul seeth of God, the more she desireth him, by grace. (ch. 43, p. 119).

It is worth quoting Julian's description of "beholding" at length, because it is a classic, and beautiful, account of contemplative prayer. In her description of it, she characteristically includes the reader into her experience--speaking of what "we", and not "the contemplative" or Julian--see in Christ. This is because, for her, the highest form of contemplative prayer is open to us all, through the grace of the Spirit, when we turn to Jesus. It begins in simple petition, and deepens in faith, sometimes overflowing into the clear sight of God which is ecstatic prayer:

Thus I saw that whenever we see the need for prayer, then our Lord is with us, helping our desire. But when, of his special grace, we behold him plainly and see no further need of prayer, then we are with him; for he draweth us to him by love. I saw and felt that his marvellous

and superabundant goodness filleth full all our powers; and saw also that his continual working in all manner of things is done so well, so wisely and so mightily that it surpasseth all our imagining--beyond all that we can explain or even conceive. Then we can do no more but behold him and enjoy: with a high and powerful desire to be entirely oned in him, to be received into his dwelling, to enjoy his loving, to delight in his goodness. It is thus that we may, with his sweet grace in our own meek, continual prayer, come into him now, in this life, by many secret touchings and sweet ghostly sights and feelings, measured out to us according as our simpleness can support it. (ch. 43, p. 119, 120).

Julian's words are full of meaning, and can best be understood only in prayer. We may, however, point to some of her more important points, as they summarize her teaching on contemplative prayer so far: that in "beholding" we are truly "oned" to Jesus, because we move beyond conscious prayer into simply "being" with him; that "beholding", for Julian, is the relationship of genuine lovers--ourselves and the Beloved--in which "he draweth us to him by love", and words become unnecessary; that "beholding" is faith in God's Love for us, seeing that God does all things well; and that the purpose of this prayer is simply for us to enjoy God, in this life, so that we might love him more and more.

We may remind ourselves, now, that Julian's blissful experience of "beholding" occurred in the context of her illness, the pain of which was to reassert itself from time to time. She is aware that the experience of contemplative prayer, which is a gift from God, will not last; for inevitably we take our eyes from Christ, and become preoccupied once more with ourselves--we sin, and we lament over sin. In this, however, God is at work, increasing our desire for him still more, urging us to seek him again in the prayer of petition:

The joy in this sight, with this true hope of his merciful keeping, made me to have feelings of comfort, so that the mourning and dread were not greatly painful. At the same time I beheld, in this shewing of God, that this kind of sight could not be continued in this life, both for the sake of his own worship, and for the increase of

our endless joy. For this reason we fail oftentimes of the sight of him; and straightaway we fall back into our self. Then find we this feeling--the contrariness which is in our self--springing from that old root of our first sin, along with all that cometh of our own furthering of it. And in this we are travailed and tempted with the feeling of sin and of pain in many diverse ways, ghostly and bodily; such is our experience in this life. (ch. 47, p. 126).

Earlier, Julian referred to "meek, continual prayer" as typical of "beholding" (ch. 43). The continual nature of our prayer is now seen to be important: for it is the nature of genuine love that one does not demand continual proof of love, but simply desires to be with the beloved. So in prayer, the experience of clear sight of Love, in Christ, is followed by a return to ourselves. The sight of God becomes less clear, in the sense of its momentary brilliance; but it becomes more steadfast, in the sense of a lasting certainty of love. This is the "beholding" of faith, which moves us to turn to Jesus, to see him and to seek him, even when we do not feel like praying at all, or when we feel that our prayer--our desire to be reassured--goes unanswered. Here Julian begins to see that true "beholding" is a turning to God which describes our whole lives, beyond the moments in which we consciously look to Jesus. Jesus urges her to persist in prayer, to "behold" him, even in the times that clear vision ceases, and despair sets in:

Pray inwardly; though there seemeth to be no relish in it, yet it is profitable enough. Though thou shouldst feel naught, pray inwardly. Pray inwardly, though thou feelest naught, though thou seest naught, yea though it seemeth thou canst not pray for dryness and barrenness. In sickness and in feebleness thy prayer is full pleasant to me (though thou seemingly hast but little savour for it), and so is all thy living prayer in my sight. (ch. 41, p. 115).

Julian's description of this "inward" prayer in the experience of "dryness and barrenness" comes in the midst of her discussion of the contemplative prayer of "beholding", because the experience of "dryness" only follows true contemplation of Christ. We said that to see Jesus, and to be aware of his

love, is to be drawn closer and closer to him, until we desire to see only him. It is when this desire has been firmly established that we can truly experience the absence of Christ, when we do not see him--just as one does not particularly miss a friend who is only an acquaintance, but may desperately miss someone with whom he has fallen in love. Julian makes it clear, however, that the "absence" refers to a "blindness" in ourselves, our own sin, rather than to the genuine absence of Jesus from our lives--which would be impossible.

The nature of Julian's "inward prayer" itself is not described in any detail in the Revelations, except that it is persistent, and comes about because of Jesus' love for us. Julian is not an analytical theologian, and so she does not distinguish between the kind of prayer which she calls "beholding" and the prayer which she calls "inward prayer", in the face of our inability to pray. There is always a temptation to classify Julian's experiences, as we know of them in the Revelations, according to categories established by other theologians--particularly those who seem to describe similar personal experiences, such as Teresa of Avila, or John of the Cross--and therefore to neatly divide Julian's various experiences of prayer, or to lay great emphasis on her precise words.³⁵ Whether this kind of analysis is valid for the Revelations

³⁵ Molinari distinguishes between "beholding which is special shewing" and "another form of infused contemplation in which there is no 'shewing'" (op. cit., p. 107). While there is a case for understanding Julian's words carefully--for example, in the difference between ordinary insight, and the "beholding" which is prayer--we should do so without forcing Julian into the categories established by other schools of thought. Molinari is right to distinguish between Julian's extraordinary experience of the "shewings" themselves (the sixteen Revelations) and the "touchings" of the Spirit which followed them through Julian's life (and which may possibly have included some kind of visionary experience); and the more ordinary or constant prayer of "beholding". These, however, do not necessarily imply that Julian passed through, or was aware of, stages of prayer identical to those understood by the Spanish Carmelite saints of two centuries later. (Cf. Molinari, op. cit., pp. 104 ff.).

or not, it seems more important here to see Julian's own point: that inherent in contemplative prayer is the unfulfilled desire to see Jesus always, and to avoid "falling" away from him. The experiences of "beholding" in clear sight, and of persistent "inward" prayer, are different; but for Julian, both are contemplative prayer, both are quiet, and they describe the two sides of the contemplative experience--"seeing" and "seeking" Jesus.

Practically speaking, to continue to "look upon" Jesus inwardly in the prayer of "beholding", even when we do not feel like praying at all and even if we know that we would benefit from it, is not easy. It requires determination and deep love, because the temptation to turn away from Jesus can be both strong and subtle. At the close of the Eighth Revelation, she experienced a remarkable temptation to abandon the prayer of "beholding". It came in the form of a notion that there is a higher prayer still, one in which we do not need to see Jesus because we can contemplate God apart from Christ, or above him. She rejects this idea after a struggle, which she finds difficult--for the idea of meditating on God directly, apart from the crucified Christ, is attractive. She has just seen Christ on the cross--a scene which she finds almost too painful--when the idea presents itself that she does not need to bear the scene of the cross at all. Truly meditative prayer might be to look "heavenward", as she had done before:³⁶

36 It is possible that this passage is a comment on The Cloud, to which Julian (along with Walter Hilton) stands in direct contrast on the subject of contemplating the passion of Christ. In ch. 7 The Cloud refers to thoughts which intrude themselves between us and the "darkness" (meaning, here, the super-essential God). These include thoughts of the Passion:

Quite possibly he [the thought] will bring to your mind many lovely and wonderful thoughts of his [God's] kindness, and remind you of God's sweetness and love, his grace and mercy. If you will but listen to him, he asks no more. He will go on chattering unceasingly,

In this time I would have looked away from the cross; yet I durst not. For I knew well that whilst I beheld the cross I was sure and safe; therefore I would not consent to put my soul in some peril. For apart from the cross was no surety against the fears of fiends. Then I had an offer in my reason; it was said to me, as though by a friend: "Look up to heaven to his Father". Then through the faith that I felt I saw well that there was nothing between the cross and heaven that could have dis-eased me. Here then I must needs look up, or else answer. So I answered inwardly, with all the might of my soul, and said: "Nay, I cannot, for Thou art my heaven". This I said because I would not. For I would rather have been in that pain till doomsday than have come to heaven otherwise than by him. For I knew well that he who had bound me so sore, would unbind me when he would.

Thus was I taught to choose Jesus for my heaven, whom I saw at that time only in pain. No other heaven pleased me than Jesus, who shall be my bliss when I come there. And that hath been a lesson to me that I should evermore do so--choose only Jesus to be my heaven, in weal and in woe. (ch. 19, p. 79).

In the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Revelations, she sees in some detail how the experience of suffering can bring us closer to God, until the time that we are taken from pain altogether to be in union with him. She learns that in the times of pain, we should turn to Jesus, "beholding" him and the promise that he gives that he will in fact be our "heaven". To contemplate him in faith is to be comforted:

For it is his will that we be comforted in overpassing joy. And that he shewed in these words: "And thou shalt come up above: and thou shalt have me for thy meed: and thou shalt be filled full of joy and bliss."

and bring you steadfastly down to think of Christ's Passion. There he will show you the wonderful kindness of God, and he wants nothing so much as that you should listen to him. For he will then go on to let you see your past manner of life, and as you think of its wretchedness your mind will be well away, back to its old haunts. (The Cloud, op. cit., pp. 60-61).

The Cloud goes on to suggest that meditation on the Passion is a foundation for contemplation, but must be laid aside by the "practised hand" in the "cloud of forgetting". Julian, on the other hand, argues that the means of forgetting our sins is precisely in the vision of the glorified Christ--whom we know only as crucified. (Cf. Hilton's Scale, Book I, ch. 92).

It is God's will that we set the point of our thought in this blissful beholding as oftentimes as we may and for as long as time keep ourselves therein, with his grace. For this is a blissful contemplation for the soul that is led of God; and it is full much to his worship, for the time that it lasteth. (ch. 64, p. 173).

Julian once more observes God's own "beholding", the way in which he looks upon us. In the Sixteenth Revelation she sees three "expressions" in God: of suffering (in the passion of the cross); of pity and compassion; and of bliss. Each of these expressions is to be seen at different times in the prayer of contemplation, depending on the way in which God wishes to reveal himself to us, as part of our "fulfilling". In each of his expressions we see his Love, and we are "oned" to him. We take on the attitude which we see in him, in contrition, compassion and longing:

Glad and merry and sweet is the blissful lovely looking of our Lord into our souls. For he ever beholdeth us as we live in loving longing; and it is his will that our soul look gladly unto him, to grant him his meed. And thus I hope that he, with his grace, hath brought and shall bring even more, that outward regard into the inward; and make us all at one with him and with each other, in that true lasting joy which is Jesus.

I have understanding of three lookings of our Lord. The first is the look which he shewed in his passion, whilst he was with us in this life, in his dying...The second look is of pity and ruth and compassion. And this sheweth he to all his lovers who have need of his mercy, with sureness of keeping. The third is the blissful look, such as shall be without end. And this was oftenest shewed and continued longest. (ch. 71, p. 184).

Ordinarily, when we experience suffering, we see in Christ the first expression, of his own pain--"helping us to bear it by his own blessed power." When we sin we see Christ in the second expression, of pity for us on account of our sin, "mightily keeping and defending us against all our enemies". Finally, we see at times the third expression, which shows what we shall be like in heaven. This is the special grace of God, and is the most important of his expressions towards us in giving us joy:

By that look we are kept in true faith, hope and charity, with contrition and devotion; and also with contemplation and all manner of true joys and sweet comforts. The blissful look of our Lord God worketh all this in us by grace. (ch. 71, p. 185).

The result of this final, blissful look is to turn us towards God even more than before, so that we truly long for him:

Ever the more clearly the soul seeth this blissful look, by the grace of longing, the more it longeth to see it in fullness; that is to say, in his own likeness. For notwithstanding that our Lord God dwelleth now in us, and claspeth us and encloseth us, out of tender love, so that he can never leave us and is nearer to us than tongue can tell or heart can think; yet can we never cease from mourning nor from weeping, nor from seeking nor from longing; until we see him clearly with this blissful look of his. (For in that precious sight no woe may abide nor weal fail.) (ch. 72, p. 186).

We have said that for Julian, the opposite of "beholding" is sin, in which we turn our attention from Jesus, to ourselves. She notes again that to turn our attention away from Christ is to open ourselves to the incapacity which comes from what is not-God. As soon as we stop thinking on Jesus' love, we begin to wonder if we are really loved at all. This turning away from Jesus becomes increasingly hard to reverse, because it keeps us from seeing God's love for us at all--like staring into darkness. Whenever we cease to contemplate God in Christ, we suffer--and in a small way, we "die":

The greatest contraries that there are, are the highest bliss and the deepest pain. The highest bliss there is, is to have God in clearness of endless light, him truly seeing, him sweetly feeling, him all perfectly having, in fullness of joy. Thus was this blissful look of our Lord shewed, in part. In which shewing I saw that sin was its greatest contrary: so far forth that as long as we have anything to do with sin, we shall never see clearly this blissful look of God. And the more horrible and grievous our sins are, the deeper we are, for that time, out of his blessed sight. And therefore it seemeth to us, oftentimes, as though we were in peril of death and in a part of hell; because of the sorrow and pain that sin meaneth to us. And thus we are dead for a time--out of very sight of our blissful life. (ch. 72, p. 185).

In the situation of sin, we are held in God's love by the fact that he looks upon us in Love, in the way that we are meant to look to him. It is his Love

itself which compels us to look to God, and not away from him, even though we know that we are sinful, His purpose for us, both in nature and in grace, is to share his Love:

But in all this, I saw, in faith, that we are not dead in the sight of God, and he passeth never away from us; though he shall never have his full bliss in us till we have our full bliss in him--truly seeing his fair, blissful look. For we are ordained thereto by kind and brought thereto by grace. Thus I saw how, with regard to those blessed creatures of endless life, sin is deadly for a short time. (ch. 72, p. 186).

The contemplative prayer of "beholding", therefore, is possible because of the way in which God "beholds" us; and in it, we share in God's own Love. In contemplative prayer we see, first, only Jesus, who is the image of God--our only "heaven" in this life, and after. But because we see Jesus who dwells in us, who has died for us, and who judges us in Love, we see ourselves. His own expressions towards us are mirrored in us, in contrition, compassion, and longing; and we are turned outward in Love. Julian's final observation with regard to the prayer of "beholding" is that it reveals to us the truth of our relationship to God, in Christ. This truth is painful, in that it reveals our own sin and blindness; but it brings joy, because it is a clear sight of God's compelling Love for us:

Thus is that blissful sight /the third of Jesus' expressions/ the end of all manner of pain unto loving souls, and full filling of all manner of joy and bliss. And that shewed he in the high marvellous words where he saith: "I it am that is highest: I it am that thou lovest: I it am that is all". It belongeth to us to have three knowings. The first is that we know our Lord God. The second is that we know ourselves--what we are by him, in kind and in grace. The third is that we know meekly what we are with regard to our sin and our feebleness. And for these three was made all this shewing, as I understand it. (ch. 72, p. 186).

C) "Thanksgiving": The Prayer of Praise

The third form of prayer which Julian describes is "thanksgiving", the prayer of praise. While "beholding" was a silent activity of "seeking" and

self-giving, in the clear sight of God in Christ, the prayer of thanksgiving is a prayer which cannot be contained in silence. Here, contemplation deepens and becomes ecstatic prayer. Thanksgiving is itself an "inward prayer", like "beholding", but which demands speech:

Also to prayer belongeth thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is a true inward knowing, a turning of ourselves with great reverence and loving dread and with all our power to the working which our Lord stirreth us to; inwardly, with joy and thanksgiving. And sometimes the abundance of it breaketh out into speech, and we say, "Good Lord, be merciful, blessed may thou be." (ch. 41, p. 115).

Julian has seen that our whole life constitutes our prayer before God (ch. 41). Thanksgiving, therefore, is more than the moments in which we praise God with our speech, in deliberate prayer. Genuine praise is to turn our will towards God fully, to do his will: we praise God with ourselves. As before, this "turning"--including the desire to praise God aloud--is not something that we necessarily intend, in the first instance. It is a spontaneous movement of the soul, which is stimulated by our experience of God's Love. We desire to do what God wants because he wants it, and because he has put the desire in our hearts: "a turning of ourselves...to the working which our Lord stirreth us to". For God, praise is not that we thank him, but that we turn to him "with joy and thanksgiving". His praise, in other words, is our own joy, as we know him in love.

Julian has said that, in "beholding" or inward prayer, we ought to continue to seek God even in the times of dryness in our prayer, when we seem unable to find him or do not feel like praying at all (ch. 41). This is an "inward" prayer, in which there is little joy and certainly no vocal praise. Yet even this kind of prayer, because it is seeking God, is a way of thanking him:

And at other times when the heart is dry, and we feel nothing, or when tempted by our enemy, we are driven by reason and by grace to

cry out loud to our Lord, rehearsing his blessed passion and great goodness. And so the power of our Lord's word pierceth the soul and quickeneth the heart, and bringeth it by his grace into true working, maketh it to pray most blissfully and have true joy in our Lord. This is a most lovely thanksgiving in his sight. (ch. 41, p. 115).

When we investigate Julian's concept of faith, we shall see that there is little distinction between her concept of the prayer of thanksgiving--a turning of our whole self to God, thanking him with our being--and faith. We note that by turning to God, reminding him of what he has done for us ("rehearsing his blessed passion") we not only offer a "lovely thanksgiving" to God, but we are blessed ourselves: we pray "most blissfully", and experience true joy in our Lord. Faith is the relationship of joy in God which is expressed in the prayer of thanksgiving.

In Julian's brief description of prayer which we have just seen, in which one cries out to God and is blessed by him, it is possible that her words mean rather more than they appear to at first blush. In the prayer which thanks God by its persistence, we are brought to "pray most blissfully". She says that our soul is pierced and our heart quickened by the "power of our Lord's word". She is not clear which "word" she means here--whether the faith of the Church as a whole, or Jesus' words in her vision, as in his promise (cited earlier in ch. 41) that "thou shalt have me for thy reward"; or even, Jesus' instruction (also in ch. 41) to pray constantly, regardless of our own feelings. In any case, Julian suggests that this particular prayer brings with it a deep inner experience which has not come before: that of "piercing" and of "quickening". On one hand, she may simply mean a kind of contrition, and a new love for God, or courage to continue to pray. On the other hand, her words suggest a particular kind of contemplative prayer which actually involves the "heart"--

meaning not only our will or inner self, but our anatomical heart as well.

We may note, first of all, that Julian rarely uses the word "heart" in the Revelations: usually, it is with reference to Jesus' pain in the crucifixion, in his "blessed heart cloven in two" (ch. 24). In this context, she depicts Jesus' heart which was pierced, according to tradition, by the soldier's lance. It has been suggested that here, as well as elsewhere in the Revelations, Julian seems to reflect a medieval devotion (still popular in much of the Church) to the "sacred heart" of Jesus.³⁷ It will be noted, however, that she does not use "heart" and "soul" interchangeably; and the rarity of the word in the text may indicate its more specialized meaning. If so, she may have experienced a way of contemplative prayer which is accompanied by a peculiar pain in the heart, and alterations of the rhythm of the heart, which is known in Orthodox spirituality as "hesychastic" prayer.³⁸

37 A small devotional book has been published which links passages from the Revelations with the elements of a litany on the Sacred Heart (Forbes, F.A., Meditations on the Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Culled from the Writings of Juliana of Norwich, Burns Oates and Washbourne Ltd., London, 1920).

There does not seem to be any published work which attempts to link devotion to the Sacred Heart with the Revelations historically, or to analyze this element of Western Catholic theology in Julian's text--if indeed it is there. Devotion to the Heart of Jesus was not, in fact, an important theme in medieval English spirituality, although the concept of being washed in the blood from Jesus' wounds, or of drinking of the water which flowed from his side, was. Contemporary art (wall paintings, crucifixes, altar pieces etc.) invariably depicts blood flowing from Jesus' right side, as is traditional in Christian art, but which is not specified in the Gospel accounts. Later devotion to the Sacred Heart altered the site of the wound to the left in some western Catholic art, but there is no evidence that Julian ever came into contact with this theme, either in art or otherwise. (The feast of the Heart of Jesus was first celebrated in 1672 and is associated with the devotions of St. John of Eudes, d. 1680. See Pourrat, P., Christian Spirituality, Part I, Burns Oates and Washbourne, Ltd., 1927, pp. 395 ff.).

38 From Gk. *hēsychia*, "rest" or "quietness". The term "hesychasm" may be used for all forms of contemplative prayer in Orthodox thought, but it

There is no historical evidence at all to suggest that Julian had contact with the Hesychastic school of Christian spirituality, and it will not be our task here to discuss this particular form of Christian contemplative prayer. However, for those readers of Julian who are familiar with it already, it is interesting to note in passing some of the similarities with Julian's own understanding of the prayer of praise, and her practice of it. Points of similarity are the following: First, Julian describes true prayer as our entire life, rather than merely as particular moments of intentional prayer. Second, within this context--in which our whole life is seen as a prayer of praise--there is a kind of prayer which moves out of "beholding" (theoria) into praise to Jesus. We should recall here that for Julian, the whole Trinity is to be understood whenever she sees Jesus; and therefore, that praise to Jesus is praise to the whole Trinity, through Jesus. Third, Julian suggests that the form which this prayer takes for her is on the order of the words, "Good Lord be merciful, blessed may thou be" (ch. 41). In Orthodoxy, the commonest form of this prayer is the "Jesus prayer", which is on the pattern "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me". In both cases the prayer is one for mercy, on one level, but on a deeper level is understood as a prayer of praise. Fourth, Julian's prayer is at once a form of liturgical prayer, and a spontaneous exclamation growing out of the "inward prayer" of contemplation. Julian's prayer springs from heartfelt joy; but she describes it as disciplined, persistent prayer, in

has been used more specifically for certain prayer disciplines involving the "Jesus Prayer" (see below, n. 39), and the Hesychast school of fourteenth-century Byzantium (especially St. Gregory Palamas). More recent interest in "hesychastic" prayer occurred in Greece (late eighteenth century) and Russia (nineteenth century to the present). See Kadloubovsky and Palmer, op. cit., pp. 32-33 and passim.

which she reminds God what he has done for us in the cross. This prayer is especially valuable in times of "dryness", and in praying it Julian is lifted out of despair into true joy. Finally, like certain proficients in the discipline of the "Jesus Prayer", Julian seems to describe the peculiar "piercing", in which one becomes aware of pain in the heart, as the prayer is repeated in rhythm with the heartbeat or of the breath.³⁹

Thus, for Julian, the prayer of thanksgiving is a "prayer of the heart" (similar to that in Orthodox practice), and it involves pain as well as joy. The praise which we offer is both spontaneous joy, and our persistence in turning to God. Julian repeats, throughout the Revelations, that the highest praise we can offer God is to find our joy in him, recognizing that he keeps us in his Love even when we cannot see it, because of our own blindness:

[Julian has a vision of the steadfast Love of God, the "light" of Charity.] And in this sight I marvelled highly. For notwithstanding our simpleness and our blindness here, our Lord endlessly beholdeth us, rejoicing in this working. And we can please him best of all by believing this truly, and rejoicing with him and in him. For as truly as we shall be in the bliss of God without end, him praising and thanking; so truly we have been in the foreknowledge of God, loved and known in his endless purpose from without-beginning. In which unbegun love he made us, and in the same love he keepeth us, and never suffereth us to be hurt in a way that our bliss might be lessened. (ch. 85, p. 207).

Our final experience of "bliss" will be to see clearly how God has, in fact, been at work in all things in our lives (both in suffering and in joy) so

39 On the whole, techniques of hesychastic prayer have not been committed to writing because of the view that it is dangerous to undertake this kind of prayer discipline apart from the close guidance of a competent spiritual director. The reader should not attempt to experiment with his own "hesychastic" prayer (even the "Jesus prayer" should be used under spiritual guidance, and with care) because of the tendency to misunderstand this kind of prayer in the West, or to equate it with non-Christian eastern mysticism. Lossky cites a number of "erroneous opinions" concerning hesychastic prayer, including the notion that it is a "mechanical process designed to induce ecstasy" (Lossky, Vision of God, op. cit., pp. 115-116).

that we were brought to him in love. Then we shall praise him for all things that happened, for good or ill:

And therefore, when judgement is given, and we are all brought up above, then shall we clearly see in God the secrets which now are hid from us. And then none of us shall be prompted to say of anything: "Lord, if it had been thus, it had been well"; but we shall all say with one voice: "Lord, blessed may thou be! For it is thus, and it is well. Now we see truly that all thing is done as was thine ordinance before anything was made." (ch. 85, p. 207).

The prayer of thanksgiving, in this life, is therefore a foretaste of the praise (or bliss) which we shall experience in afterlife. As in heaven, praise is the natural response of one who loves God, upon seeing his goodness towards us. On one occasion, during her visions, Julian breaks out into laughter when she sees how Christ has overcome the "fiend" on her behalf:

Also I saw our Lord scorning /the fiend's/ malice and bringing to naught his sight; and he wills that we do likewise. At this sight I laughed mightily--which made them laugh that were about me. And their laughter was a liking to me; and I thought, "would that all my even-christians had seen as I saw; then would they all have laughed with me." But I saw not Christ laughing--it was the sight that he shewed me, I well know, that made me to laugh. Yet I understood that we may laugh both for comfort of ourselves and in our rejoicing in God. For the fiend is overcome. (ch. 13, p. 70).

Although Julian does not see (in this instance) a change in Christ's own expression, she recognizes that he means for her to laugh, which laughter--Julian's joy--is praise to God. At the same time, it reflects the inner joy of the Trinity in our salvation:

And Christ, in his body, mightily beareth us up into heaven. For I saw that Christ, us all having in him--that shall be saved by him--worshipfully presenteth his father in heaven with us. Which present with full thanks his Father receiveth, and courteously giveth it unto his Son, Jesus Christ. Which gift and working is joy to the Father, bliss to the Son, and liking to the Holy Ghost. And of all things that belong to us, it is most liking to our Lord that we rejoice in this joy which is in the blessed Trinity because of our salvation. (ch. 55, p. 151).

If the experience of praise in this life is a foretaste of eternal "thanksgiving", it is also a reflection of God's "thanksgiving" towards us. We observed that, for Julian, the prayer of "beholding", including the movement through contrition, compassion and longing, reflects the expressions which Julian saw in Jesus' face. Our contemplation reflects God's "contemplation" of himself, and of us in relation to himself. We also said that in the prayer of petition, God makes his will our will, i.e., God's will is always our own good, just as our will is conformed to his in prayer. Now Julian depicts the "thanksgiving" which is in God; and also the "thanksgiving" which we shall receive from God, in eternal life. Julian sees, in the Sixth Revelation, a vision of a heavenly banquet (reminiscent of the banquet to which Jesus refers in parable--cf. Matthew 22) in which the Lord presides as host. His purpose in this banquet is to "thank" his "friends", those who have loved him in this life:

After this, our Lord said: "I thank thee for thy service, and for the travail of thy youth." And in this my understanding was lifted up into heaven, where I saw our Lord God as a Lord in his own house--a Lord who hath called all his most dear friends to a solemn feast. Then I saw the Lord taking no seat in his own house; but I saw him royally reigning in his house, filling it all full with joy and mirth, himself, endlessly: to bring gladness and solace to his most dear friends, full homely and full courteously, with a marvellous melody of endless love in his own fair blissful countenance: for the shining countenance of the Godhead filleth all heaven full of joy and bliss. (ch. 14, p. 71).

Julian goes on to describe three ways in which God's servants will be "thanked" in God's presence:

God shewed three degrees of bliss that each soul shall have in heaven that hath willingly served God in any degree in earth. The first is the worshipful thanks of our Lord God that he shall receive when he is delivered out of pain /i.e., the earthly life, where pain ("travail") is a possibility, and the reality of serving God in the place of sin/. This thanks is so high and so worshipful that it seemeth that it would fill him even if he received no more. For, me thought, all the pain

and travail that all living men might suffer could not have deserved the worshipful thanks that one man shall have who willingly shall have served God. The second is that all the blessed creatures that are in heaven shall see this worshipful thanking...The third is that as new and as pleasing as the thanks is when it is first received, even so shall it last without end...But I saw that whenever or what time a man or woman be truly turned to God for one day's service according to his endless will, they shall have all these three degrees of bliss. And the more that the loving soul seeth this courtesy of God, the more eager she is to serve him all her life. (ch. 14, p. 71-72).

Finally, Julian describes thanksgiving, like petition and contemplation, as something which God works in us himself. She is quite sure that our praise arises in God, just as it returns to him: first, in the way that we have just seen, in that it is God's love which prompts us to praise him; second, in that we are bound to God in the indwelling Christ, who offers praise on our behalf, and from within us. In a moment we shall look in more detail at the practical implications of her vision of the "Lord and servant", in which she sees a "oneing" between man and God in the person of Jesus (ch. 51). Here, we simply note that her understanding of our bond to God in Christ is the basis for her understanding of praise. We have observed already that in her vision of Mary, she sees how prayer is possible at all: because of the incarnation of the Son of God, in which God stoops to humanity so that we might be able to respond to him (pp. 33-34, above). Similarly, she depicts praise in terms of the incarnation, in which our nature is "oned" to God in Christ:

God the blissful Trinity--which is everlasting Being, right as he is endless from without-beginning, right so it was in his endless purpose to make man's kind. Which fair kind was first prepared for his own Son, the second Person. And whenso he would, by full accord of all the Trinity, he made all of us at once. And in our making he knit us and oned us to himself. By which oneing we are kept as clean and as noble as we were made. By virtue of that same precious oneing, we love our Maker and like him, praise him and thank him and endlessly rejoice in him. And this is the working which is wrought continually in every soul that shall be saved--the aforesaid godly will. (ch. 58, p. 158).

As a whole, she is less concerned in the Revelations to develop a theology of praise than she is to practice it. She does not write of the prayer of praise in any technical sense, except in the simple ways that we have seen. The distinguishing mark of Julian's Revelations, however, is continuous praise: the exclamation, "Blessed may thou be!", which becomes part of her prose even as she composes the book, and which must have punctuated her response to the visions themselves; her repeated references to the joy which she felt upon seeing her Lord; and her assurance that God's greatest desire for us is praise, in which we share in his joy. For her, this deep joy, which is constant even through the experience of pain, is a key gift of the Spirit: our lives become true praise to God, in all the things that we do. This, in turn, is her central observation concerning the prayer of thanksgiving: that true thankfulness to God is to reflect his own joyful Love, depending upon him in his mercy, and asking him to work in us the "oneing" which he has already accomplished for us in Christ.

In the relationship of deep trust and love, the thanksgiving of words gives way once more to a deeper one, of continuous communion with God. Thus Julian describes a circular movement, in which thanksgiving leads into the prayers of petition, in which we yearn for God, and of "beholding", in which we turn to him and see his Love; and these, in turn, lead back into praise, and the exclamations of joy which we see in her Revelations. The prayer of praise summarizes the whole of the Christian life, which is at once a life of petition and of "beholding", and of praise to our God with our whole selves, in his love.

CHAPTER THREE: TRANSFIGURATION THROUGH PAIN (COMPASSION)

The Christian Experience of the Cross

We have seen that, for Julian, the Spirit manifests himself in joy and in rest, and particularly in turning us to God in prayer. The highest form of contemplative prayer, for Julian, is to see the joyful expression of Jesus' face, and to respond in kind--with thanksgiving, our own joy in him. At the same time, to behold God in Christ is to face the human reality of pain. In Christ, God chooses to meet us in pain: in Christ's whole life, as God becomes incarnate into the human situation of sin and pain, and especially in the crucifixion. Julian's visions of the Trinity in Christ begin in the body of the crucified Jesus. In his wounds, she sees the extent of his love; and in experiencing his love, she shares in his wounds--in contrition, in compassion, and in deep longing for God. The work of the Spirit in "oneing" us to God in Christ is therefore to draw us into his suffering, so that we might share fully in his joy.

In "Charity Created" we considered some of the ways in which Julian saw the "oneing" between God and man in the person of Jesus. The crucifixion was the most important evidence for this "oneing", because she saw in Christ's suffering how the Son of God lowered himself absolutely into the human condition. Now we shall look to the crucifixion again, but this time to see the way in which the "lover of Christ" is drawn into Jesus' experience of pain, and ultimately into his love as the Son of God. Whereas before we were concerned with the movement of God into humanity, we shall now consider the movement of humanity into God--the human response to God in the Spirit. Both movements center in the cross, because the movements of God into man, and of man into God, inhere

in the person of Jesus. "Charity Created" therefore brings about "charity given", the human response in which humanity is transfigured into the likeness of God, which transfiguration involves the experience of pain.

Although we shall see the experience of pain, which she identified (for the "lover of Christ") with the cross, as the occasion for a transfiguration by the Spirit, or a conformation to the being of God in Christ, we should bear in mind that for Julian pain itself is never a reflection of God's own being. We said that joy and peace manifest the Spirit; and in the same way, pain is for her the manifestation of sin, the opposite of the Spirit. Earlier we said that "beholding" Jesus frees us from pain, whereas to look at sin conforms us to sin, and creates pain. Having said this, we need to distinguish immediately between Julian's concept of suffering in sin, and the oft-repeated idea, not found in Julian, that human beings suffer (are punished by God) as a result of their own individual transgressions.

There is no question that for Julian, sin creates pain. One of her better-known Revelations, the Thirteenth, depicts sin precisely in terms of pain, and she is unable to see sin in any other way:

And yet I saw not sin. For I believe it hath no manner of substance nor particle of being. It cannot be known except by the pain that is caused thereby. (ch. 27, p. 91).

In the same vision Jesus tells her:

"It is true that sin is the cause of all this pain. But all shall be well and all shall be well, and all manner thing shall be well." (ch. 27, p. 92).

Furthermore, she depicts sin as a chasm into which man has fallen, and which brings about his crippling (ch. 51). If this is the case, it stands to reason (in her logic) that the greater our attraction to sin, the greater our suffering from it. In this sense, sin is "punished" by pain: every sin--i.e.,

every instance in which we will to participate in what is not-God--brings about its own pain, because it results in an erosion of our own nature, an attack on our being. Sin is the opposite of life, and in the context of sin, in this life, we are "dead" (ch. 72). She evolves the idea that every sin results in pain according to its grievousness; but that, conversely, the pain which we suffer from it ("we" referring to Christ's lovers) is rewarded by God's love. This is the "thanking" for "travail" which was depicted for her in the vision of the banquet (ch. 14):

God shewed that sin shall be no shame but rather worship for man. For right as for every sin, in truth, there is an answering pain, even so for every sin there is given a bliss to the same soul, by love. Right as different sins are punished by different pains, according to their grievousness, even so shall they be rewarded in heaven with different joys according as the sin has been painful and sorrowful to the soul on earth. (ch. 38, p. 108).

It might appear on first glance that, in the above passage, Julian has in mind the concept of purgatory, in which each sin is punished before the soul is admitted into bliss; or, that she is referring to two categories of men--those who will receive pains for their sins (in damnation), and those who will receive bliss. However, she does not refer to purgatorial pain by name; and her only reference to "hell and purgatory" in the Revelations (ch. 33) is to say that she desired to see them, because in fact she had not. Later on, she concludes that the teaching of the Church concerning damnation is legitimate (a question we shall take up in more detail in a moment); but purgatorial pain is no more mentioned in the Revelations, and it seems on the whole to be foreign to the thrust of her thought. She makes it clear that the time of our suffering in sin (speaking of the soul-to-be-saved) is now, in this life; which suffering is brought about, not as a punishment specifically sent by God, but by sin itself. That she is speaking of two categories of souls is

ruled out by the text which we have just quoted: she says that "even so for every sin there is given a bliss to the same soul..."

Julian's idea that the pains of sin will actually be rewarded in the soul-to-be-saved is as original as it is curious, and is typical of her ability to hold to paradox in her understanding of divine logic. Its theological ramifications, however, seem sound and well-reasoned. She argues, for example, that there is no way to avoid pain by being righteous: God does not visit us with pain from time to time because of our "sins", but pain is the milieu in which we live, because we live in sin. Towards the end of her Revelations Jesus says to her:

"Accuse not thyself that thy tribulation and thy woe is all thy fault. For it is not my will that thou shouldst be heavy and sorrowful without discretion. For I tell you: Howsoever thou doest, thou shalt have woe..." (ch. 77, p. 196).

One implication of this line of reasoning is that the "lover of God", and even the saint, can experience the marks of sin--in suffering--as much as the worst sinner. Once we understand that suffering is part of the "given" in our human situation, we can see, in fact, how it is possible for Jesus to suffer pain at all, even though he is completely without guilt. This was an important discovery as she reflected on the wounds which she saw in Christ, and the bloody imprint on St. Veronica's handkerchief in Rome (ch. 10). If it is possible for Christ, who is without sin, to suffer--and to suffer more than any human being, as the True Human Being--then she concludes that suffering is not simply a punishment for sins.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ This seems to be Julian's reasoning, but of course it is not the only logical alternative. Anselmic doctrine (to oversimplify) retained the idea that punishment for sin must be suffered by someone; therefore Christ is punished in our place (emphasizing the "offense" of sin to

Next, there is a distinction in the Revelations between suffering the effects of sin, although one is in communion with God in the Spirit, and suffering in sin quite apart from the love of God. In the Eighth Revelation (ch. 17) Julian experiences what she takes to be the pain of Jesus' crucifixion in her own body. She cries out, "Is there any pain in hell like this?" The answer is that there is, indeed, a greater pain--the pain of despair, which is the pain of hell. This kind of pain results from an "unknowing" of God, a separation from our true Self who is Christ. For her, the nature of sin itself--which she sees specifically in anxiety--is to augment human pain into despair, so that pain is magnified and becomes the ultimate reality. Indeed, pain itself--in whatever form--is the sole effect of sin, and is ultimately to be seen in death. Conversely, the work of the Spirit in the context of sin (in our sensual humanity) is to transform human suffering into the experience of "oneing", and therefore into the occasion for Joy. In faith, pain will be seen as a temporary phenomenon, only a "point" in the scale of eternal Love (ch. 64). Pain itself, the result of sin, is used by the Spirit to "purge" us of sin, and to turn us to God (ch. 27).

Finally, she depicts the kind of suffering which is unique to love. This is not the "travail" of sin, but is to be seen in the spiritual "wounds" which Julian suffers as she is "oned" to Christ, in contrition, compassion and longing. It is not clear in the Revelations how far Julian originally understood these "wounds" to be merely allegorical, or how far she actually expected to

God's honour, which offense cannot be rectified except by an infinite punishment--suffered by the Son of God). Additionally, the idea that punishment for sins takes the form of (physical) earthly suffering had great currency in Julian's day. See below, p. 422, and n. 59.

suffer from them. But there can be little doubt that Julian did suffer greatly, in acquiring them. While her physical pain and even her anxiety (about sin and punishment) were relieved during the time of her "shewings", she felt Jesus' own deep spiritual suffering, in his compassion for the world, his humiliation by sin, and his patient suffering at the hands of wrathful men. When Julian has come very close to God, through the experience of the visions, she is allowed to suffer the greatest pain of all--the pain of longing for God, through an experience of his "absence", in the temptation of the fiend (ch. 66 ff.). She refers to this experience as a "night"; and though it is a deep dread, it is distinct from the "doubtful dread" of sin.⁴¹ The result of her longing to know God, through the experience of his "absence" in this life, is her desire to have him in eternity, in which there will be no fear of separation, and no pain.

The immediate context of Julian's Revelations is her own physical pain, after seven days and nights at the point of death. Julian, we recall, had felt her body begin to numb, her eyes were fixed, and she was unable to talk, when she was instructed to look at the crucifix (ch. 3). Upon looking to the

⁴¹ It is left to another study to compare Julian's concept of "night" with the "dark night" of the senses, and the soul, in St. John of the Cross (esp. The Dark Night of the Soul, Books I and II). Probably Julian's experience of "dryness" (ch. 41) describes something like a "night of the senses", while "reverent dread" is like St. John's "night of the soul". The experience of the "fiend" itself, however, seems to be quite different--not merely a deprivation of God's presence in prayer, but a direct confrontation with the demonic. Julian does not describe faith in terms of any kind of "night" experience (in contrast to The Cloud or the Spanish mystical tradition after St. John), but always refers to "light", "revelation", "clearness of sight", and so on. Here she seems to be closer to the experience of certain Orthodox saints (e.g., Seraphim of Sarov), in which transfiguration is an important theme--involving an experience of light--and to elements of the Franciscan tradition.

crucifix, at the moment that her visions began, she was suddenly relieved of her pain--a phenomenon which she took to be un-natural, or super-natural, but which she did not expect to last. In fact, she regarded this apparent healing as a temporary setback, because she actually desired to get on with the process of dying. Although she was sorry to die so young, she expected on the other hand to be relieved from pain permanently, in death. At this point, however, Julian recalled her prayer for the "wound" of compassion for the dying Christ, and she expected her own mortal pains to teach her about the crucifixion.

The facts of Julian's illness and her prayer for "compassion" should be borne in mind in our reading of Julian's theology of pain. They remind us that whatever Julian says about the way in which God uses pain to turn us to himself, she is writing out of the personal experience of bitter pain--which in fact deepens through Julian's experience of the visions, from physical suffering to deep spiritual pain. Thus it is hardly the case that Julian skirts the real problem of pain, to say that somehow suffering is good for us. Rather, she confronts the nature of pain directly, in her own body and soul; and we may even say that the Revelations begin at a moment when Julian actually seeks pain, in her prayer for compassion. In this confrontation she realizes that God is Lord over all things, including pain; and the experience of pain only deepens her faith in his omnipotent Love.

At the same time, we should recognize that Julian's aim in the Revelations is not to develop a theology of suffering, or a metaphysical explanation for it, or even a theology of the cross. She simply wants to be compassionate for Christ's pains: to be present at the cross, contemplatively, to share in the Virgin's love and the experience of the disciples (she thinks especially of John, and Mary Magdalene). She rightly presumes that their love

resulted in great suffering, to see Jesus suffer; and she experiences the same pain in the time of her visions. The extent to which there is a theology of suffering in the Revelations demonstrates the extent to which she actually did participate in the pains which she saw in Christ, and in the experience of the disciples. It is significant that the direction of her evolution is not to begin in pain, to move from there to a blissful relief from pain; but to begin with the sudden, and unexpected, experience of healing (when her visions began) and to move into a deeper and deeper sharing in the pain of the cross. It is precisely in her suffering that her awareness of divine Love deepens, which suffering she expects to continue until her entry into heaven.

We have said that her understanding of pain begins in healing. Evidently, she felt no pain at all during the first six Revelations. She continually exclaimed "Lord, bless us!" (as in ch. 8), and was totally absorbed in her visions of divine Love. Even so, she thought that the joy that she experienced then would serve her later on, in the times that she might require comfort:

God is all that is good, as I see it. And God hath made all that is made; and God loveth all that he hath made. Thus he that loveth the whole--all his even-christians--for God, loveth all that is... I am hopeful by the grace of God that he who beholdeth it thus shall be truly taught and mightily comforted when he needeth comfort (I speak of them that shall be saved. For in this time God shewed me no other.) (ch. 9, p. 61).

When the time for "comfort" came for Julian, however, she did not experience the relief which she might have expected. At the beginning of the Seventh Revelation, she experienced a "falling" from comfort into pain, and correspondingly, from peace and certainty into "heaviness and weariness" (ch. 15). Immediately she understood that she was not being punished in her "falling" into pain, but that it was permitted by God for her own good, and would be overcome by him:

This vision was shewed to my understanding to teach me that it is expedient to some souls to have experience in this wise--sometimes to be in comfort, and sometimes to lack comfort and to be left to themselves. It is God's will that we know that he keepeth us surely, even the same, in woe and in weal; and that for profit of his soul a man is sometimes left to himself, without his sin always being the cause. For in this time I had not sinned so as to be left to myself; also it was all so sudden...It is God's will that we keep us in comfort with all our might. For bliss is lasting without end; whilst pain is passing, and shall be brought to naught in them that shall be saved. Therefore it is not God's will that we keep in step with our feelings of pains, by sorrowing and mourning for them; but rather at once pass them over, and keep ourselves in the endless liking which is God. (ch. 15, p. 73).

In the Eighth Revelation, she became aware that her pains were the pains of the cross. She noticed, however, a difference between her own pains and Jesus' pains, in that hers were transitory, while his seemed to be long-lasting; her pain was largely physical suffering, while his was far deeper, in his "thirst" for mankind to be lifted out of sin. First, she spends some time developing the extent to which Jesus seemed to her to suffer on the cross:

The pain, sharp and bitter as it was, was yet long-lasting--I saw it. And the pain dried up all the lively quality of Christ's flesh. So I saw the sweet flesh dry before my eyes, part by part, and with marvellous pain. As long as there was spirit and life in Christ's flesh, so long suffered he. This pain seemed to last as long as if he had been seven nights in death, dying all the time, at the very point of passing away, and suffering always in great pain. Where I say "it seemed...as if he had been seven nights in death", this specifieth that his sweet body was so discoloured, so dry, so shrunken, so death-like and so piteous as though he had been seven nights in death, dying all the time. And me thought that the drying of Christ's flesh was the greatest pain, and the last, of his passion. (ch. 16, p. 74).

Her reference to the "seven nights" can hardly be overlooked, even though she pauses to explain it without reference to herself. She has, in fact, been "seven nights in death". The significance of this vision, at this point, is that Julian sees her own pains in Christ; his pain, however, is lasting, while her pains have come and gone. The magnitude of Christ's human suffering is emphasized throughout this vision, as for example in his "drying" through loss

of blood, and from the cold (ch. 17). Then a second movement begins, in which she shares in Jesus' pains just as he has shared in hers. While she says in chapter 17 that Jesus' pains are so great "they cannot be told" (p. 76), these words are qualified importantly in the Shorter Version of the Revelations:⁴²

Such pains I saw that all is too little that I can tell or say of them, for it may not be told, unless every soul should feel in himself that which was in Christ Jesus, according to the saying of Saint Paul: 'Let that mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus.' (ch. X, S G L. The quotation from Phil. 2:5 does not appear in Julian's text).

She understands that the historical suffering of Christ on the cross is not being repeated--it is a once-for-all event--but that in some sense she is participating in it. She begins to "feel in herself" the pains which are in Christ Jesus:

The shewing of Christ's pains filled me full of pain. For though I knew well that he had suffered just the once; yet he wished to shew me his pain and fill me with mind of it, as I had before desired of him. In all this time of Christ's presence, I felt no pain except for Christ's pain. Then it seemed I knew but little what his pain was that I had asked for; and like a wretch I repented me--thinking that had I known what it was like, I would have been loath to pray for it. For my pain seemed to pass beyond any bodily death; and I thought, "Is any pain in hell like this?" (ch. 17, p. 76).

The pain which Julian experiences may be, in the beginning, the actual pain of her illness, which she takes to be a kind of recapitulation of the crucifixion in her. The principal suffering which she describes, however, is not physical pain, but the pain of "compassion":

Of all the pains that lead to salvation, this is the greatest--to see the Lover suffer. How could any pain be greater than to see him, that is all my life, all my bliss and all my joy, suffer? Here felt I steadfastly that I loved Christ so much above myself that there was no pain that could be suffered like to the sorrow I had, to see him in pain. (ch. 17, p. 77).

⁴² For Julian's use of the Bible in this reference and elsewhere, see the Appendix below. Sr. Reynolds has added the quotation to Julian's sentence, which ends with the word "Paul".

Julian concludes that the greater suffering is spiritual, not physical; and that the pain she feels upon seeing Christ suffer reflects the pain which God feels for us, in beholding our sin and our own pain. There is no human pain so great as this, because there is no human love as great as God's Love, as we see it in the cross.

Having begun to experience the pain of compassion, she sees it more clearly in the person of Mary, who is present at the crucifixion. Compassion is seen to be a "oneing" in love, which mirrors a mother's love for her child. Mary's pain, however, is unique, because Mary is blessed more than any other human being in the knowledge that her son is the Son of God. As his mother, she loves him more dearly and more intimately than any other. Yet even Mary's suffering in compassion reflects the greater compassion which her Son feels towards us:

Here I saw, in part, the compassion of our blessed Lady Saint Mary, for Christ. She was so oned to him in love, that the greatness of her love was the cause of the greatness of her pain. In this I saw the substance of the kind love his creatures have to him, continued by grace. Which kind love was most abundantly shewed in his sweet Mother--an overpassing love. For as much as she loved him more than any other, and the sweeter that the love is, the more sorrow it is to the lover to see that body that he loves in pain. (ch. 18, p. 77).

So far, we have seen her participation in the pain of the cross in terms of compassion, which is like that of the Virgin Mary for her Son; and in this, Julian's original prayer for "compassion" (ch. 2) was answered in detail. Now, however, her understanding of compassionate suffering is deepened. There is an ontological bond between the incarnate Son and the soul-to-be-saved, such that our suffering is his, and his suffering becomes our own. Furthermore, Christ has taken on himself the suffering of the whole world, and the whole world--whether it knows it or not--groans in travail with the crucified Lord.

She depicts the sympathetic suffering of nature at the time of the crucifixion:

Here I saw, in my understanding, a great oneing between Christ and us. For when he was in pain, we were in pain; and all creatures that could suffer pain, suffered with him; that is to say, all creatures that God hath made for our service. Heaven and earth failed in their kind for sorrow at Christ's dying. (ch. 18, p. 78).

There are two senses in which the world shares in the suffering of Christ, as she sees it. The first is in the historical event of the crucifixion: the world shuddered at the moment of Christ's death, and both the heavens and the earth suffered in their own ways--in earthquakes, an eclipse, and in the resurrection of the dead from their tombs (she refers to the events depicted in the passion narratives, particularly in Matthew 27:51 ff.).⁴³ The other is a continuous suffering, which takes place now in those who love God. Julian depicts these two kinds of suffering in terms of persons--in Pilate, in the legendary "St. Denis", and in the Virgin Mary (whose suffering, as we have just seen, is the type of the Church). Julian concentrates her attention on St. Denis:

⁴³ Her ultimate source is the passion narrative in St. Matthew, 27:51-54:

And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks were split; the tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe, and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

and Matthew 27:45 and parallels: "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until about the ninth hour." Julian's immediate source is probably not the gospels themselves, but simply the theme as it was popularly known, and depicted in the passion plays of her time.

Thus those that were his friends [Jesus' disciples] suffered pain, for love; and all in general suffered. That is to say: they that knew him not, suffered in the failing of every manner of comfort except in the mighty secret keeping of God. I speak of two sorts of people that knew him not--as may be understood by these two persons, one, Pilate; the other St. Denis of France, who was at that time a pagan. For when he saw the wonders and marvels, the sorrows and dreads that befell at that time, he said: "Either the world is now at an end, or else he that is Maker of Kind is suffering". Wherefore he wrote on an altar: "This is an altar of the unknown God". It is God, of his goodness, that maketh the planets and the elements to work in their kind for both the blessed and the cursed; in that time this working was withdrawn from both. Wherefore it was that they who knew him not were in sorrow at that time. (ch. 18, p. 78).

We are reminded that "St. Denis of France" is meant to be Dionysius the Areopagite (temple-keeper) who is depicted in Acts 17:34 as having been converted by St. Paul at Athens. The Acts, of course, does not mention anything at all about Dionysius except to give his name, in the one verse. Popular medieval piety, however, knew him as a theologian and he was a symbol of the pagans who desired to worship the True God, although they were ignorant of Christ.⁴⁴ Pilate, on the other hand, represents those pagans who did not respond to Christ in love, and who did not love God at all--in fact, who put him to death. We should note that Julian depicts, in St. Denis, a degree of "oneing" among certain pagans which suggests that they are to be included among the souls-to-be-saved. Her point here, however, is that the whole world, including those who did not know Christ at all, suffered with him in his death.

The second kind of suffering which is shared with Jesus is compassionate suffering, by those who love him. Mary is the archetype of this compassionate suffering, because of her mother's love. Mary also represents the Church;

⁴⁴ See above, pp. 84 ff.

for like Mary, all who love Christ stand at the foot of the cross and suffer with him:

Thus was our Lord Jesus pained for us; and we all stand in this way of pain, with him, and shall do until we come to his bliss; as I shall say hereafter. (ch. 18, p. 78).

Julian includes all the pains that we experience in this life as part of our suffering with Christ. "When he was in pain, we were in pain" (ch. 18); but Christ continues to be in pain, because of his "thirst" to see mankind "oned" in his Love--the greatest suffering that Christ undergoes (ch. 17). Thus she argues that his suffering will continue until the time of judgement, as long as we are in sin; and our own pain, during this time, shares in his:

And for the sins of every man that shall be saved he suffered; and he saw and endured every man's sorrow, desolation and anguish, in his kindness and love. For in as much as our Lady sorrowed for his pains, as much suffered he sorrow for her sorrows--and more: as much more as his sweet manhood is worthier in kind. As long as he was passible, he suffered for us. And now he is uprisen and no more passible, yet still he suffereth with us...(ch. 20, p. 81).

It will now be helpful to reconstruct her thoughts concerning our compassionate suffering with Christ, in which he suffers with us and we with him, in the form of a short argument. She does not outline the steps of her thought for us; but with care, it is possible to see a progression in her logic which underlies the Revelations where she touches on the problem of pain. The argument builds from the beginning of the Revelations, so that it will be necessary to recapitulate some of her concepts which are already familiar to us:

1. God accomplishes all things in his love.

We have already observed that her first "shewing", and the main part of all her teachings, is that God loves all things, and "keeps" them in his love. The theme is emphasized again and again in the Revelations, but never too often; for though it may seem obvious to say that "God is love", or even that

"God does all things", it is difficult to hold these two propositions together in the experience of pain. In pain, there is a tendency to conclude that God does not love (because he has permitted pain), or else that God is not in control of all things (because pain is not something that a loving God would desire mankind; hence God cannot do anything about it). Julian sees the absolute necessity, however, of holding both that God is Love, and that God is omnipotent, if God is to be God at all:

God is all that is good, as I see it; And God hath made all that is made; and God loveth all that he hath made. (ch. 9, p. 61).

The vision of the "hazelnut" makes this point exactly. If God were not both all-powerful and all-loving, the universe would fly apart. There would be no pain, it is true--but only because there would be nothing at all.

In "charity created" we saw that the tension between these two propositions raised, for Julian the question of how evil can exist, or why sin was allowed to come about. Her solution was to assert that God does not create sin, but on the other hand that sin "exists" as a kind of non-being--the absence of God's Love, or contrariness to God. Pain is the existential manifestation of sin, like that of illness in the body. But pain, too, must be understood in the light of her assertion that God loves all things. If pain is a fact of human life, and if God loves human beings, then it is clear (for Julian) that pain has been permitted by God's Love:

All that our Lord doeth is rightful, and all that he suffereth is worshipful. In these two are comprehended good and evil. All that is good our Lord doeth, and all that is evil our Lord suffereth. I do not say that evil is worshipful, but I say that the sufferance of our Lord God is worshipful; for by it his goodness shall be known without end; and his meekness and mildness by his working of mercy and grace. Rightfulness is a thing so good that it cannot be better than it is. For God himself is very rightfulness, and all his works are done as sightfully as they are ordained from without--beginning, by his high might, his high wisdom and his high goodness--

just as he hath ordained them for the best, even so he worketh continually, and leadeth them to the best end. (ch. 35, p. 103).

2. God himself undergoes whatever suffering he permits.

Because she first sees suffering in terms of Christ's own suffering on the cross--and not in herself or in humanity in general--her theology of pain remains distinctly Christocentric. This means that any notion of a callous or "distant" god who permits suffering, but remains aloof from it, is denied from the beginning by her visions. For her, suffering is most clearly to be seen in God, who bears our pains in his body, on the cross.

Earlier, in our discussion of human nature in the Revelations, we noted the importance of the word "kind" in Julian's usage: that "kind" may mean both "nature" or natural, and "kindly", i.e., loving. The reader will have noticed, in the passages quoted above, still another word which serves a double purpose for her: "All that is good our Lord doeth, and all that is evil our Lord suffereth." To "suffer" means, in this context, to permit. At the same time, it means, as always, to bear pain. She sees that in the incarnation and crucifixion, God has permitted all that is evil, by suffering it in his own body. The thrust of this argument is that God has shared in our human suffering, so that we might share in his joy; or, reading back into her understanding of the incarnation, God has become man so that we might become one with God.

We have said that in the Revelations, Jesus is seen to suffer not merely because he is a human being--i.e., bears pain in his humanity--but that he suffers on the cross because he is God, and suffers as God.⁴⁵ The extent of his suffering is greater than any we might undergo, precisely because he is

⁴⁵ See above, pp. 239 ff.

the incarnate Son, who is shamed beyond comprehension in the cross:

Thus I saw our Lord Jesus languishing a long time: for the oneing with the Godhead gave strength to the manhood to suffer, for love, more than all the rest of man might suffer. I mean not only more pain than all men might suffer, but also that he suffered more pain than all men of salvation that ever were from the first beginning unto the last day could tell of our fully reckon; having regard to the worthiness of this highest worshipful King and his shameful ignominious death. For he that is highest and worthiest was most foully confemned and utterly despised. For the highest point to be seen in his passion is to consider and to know that it is God that suffered. (ch. 20, p. 80, Emphasis added).

In "Charity Created" we noted the ontological implications of this suffering--i.e., that God has wholly entered into the human condition of pain, in order to lift us into himself--and we shall briefly touch on them again in a moment. Meantime, our concern is with the psychological point of faith, for Julian: that if God knows our pain intimately, and has suffered in far greater measure than can be told, then we should endure our own relatively small pains without complaint:

And therefore, though we be in so much pain, woe and bitterness that it seemeth that we can think of naught but the state we are in, or that we feel; as soon as we may, let us pass lightly over it, and set it at naught. And why? Because God willeth us to know that if we know him and love him and reverently dread him, we shall have peace and be in great rest; and all that he doeth shall be great liking to us. And this shewed our Lord in these words: "Why should it then grieve thee to suffer awhile, seeing it is my will and to my worship?" (ch. 65, p. 175).

Finally, her image of Jesus as our Mother is important here. Mothers suffer when their children suffer, and sometimes permit their children to fall for their own good, though it causes the mother pain to see it (ch. 6). How much a mother suffers when her children suffer, depends upon the extent of her love for them; and we know that our Mother's love for us is infinite. Julian understands this first with regard to Mary's compassion for her Son

at the cross, as we have seen (ch. 18). Then, understanding that Christ is our true Mother, she sees Jesus' suffering as correspondingly greater:

For in as much as our Lady sorrowed for his pains, as much suffered he sorrow for her sorrows--and more: as much more as his sweet manhood is worthier in kind. (ch. 20, p. 81).

In what we have seen so far, Julian establishes that God suffers with us, both in the crucifixion and in our own pains at the moment; that, in Christ, he has suffered as man and that he has suffered as God; and that all this has been permitted, at great cost to himself (the "travail" of the Son), for our own joy. Next she establishes that the suffering which we undergo in sin is a condition of the whole of our life, even though it causes "pain" to God; and even though we love God, and hate sin.

3. We shall continue to sin as long as we remain in this life, bringing pain to God and also to ourselves.

We said that, for Julian, the suffering which Jesus experienced on the cross was of two kinds: human suffering, and divine suffering (characterized by two kinds of "thirst", ch. 17). Part of the divine anguish was the humiliation of the Son (ch. 20); and part was, and still is, the compassion which God has for us, desiring to see us "oned" to him in love.⁴⁶ Always, however, the cause of his pain is our own sin.

For the lover of God, the realization that we cause pain to God becomes an intolerable burden. Julian complains that she cannot bear to see Jesus suffer (ch. 17), knowing that she is responsible for his pains, as one who is in sin. She is distressed at the existence of sin because she sincerely does not

⁴⁶ For the idea that the divine compassion continues, review ch. 20, p. 81; ch. 31, p. 97; ch. 75, p. 192.

want to sin, and subsequently to cause pain to her Beloved (ch. 27). The more she is "oned" to Jesus, through her visions, the more she feels compassion for his suffering; and in this relationship of love, she begins to hate her own sin, not for her own sake, but for his: for her sin, as she sees it, inflicts the pain upon Christ which she sees in the crucifixion.

When Julian expresses her anxiety over the existence of sin, she is told, in a celebrated vision, that all shall be well despite sin:⁴⁷

...I often wondered why the beginning of sin was not prevented by the great foreseeing wisdom of God; for then--or so it seemed to me--all would have been well. Such a thought was much to be forsaken; yet nevertheless mourning and sorrow I made on this account, without any understanding or mutual discernment. But Jesus, who in this vision informed me of all that I needed, answered with this word saying: "Sin must needs be, but all shall be well. All shall be well; and all manner thing shall be well." (ch. 27, p. 91).

Although great emphasis has been put on the words "all shall be well" by modern students of the Revelations, it would seem that for Julian herself the most important message lies in the phrase "sin must needs be". If, in God's sight, sin is somehow necessary or useful, then there is indeed a possibility for reconciliation between God and sinful man. She need not despair over her own sin, or the pain that it causes. In her joy at this realization, however, she fails to attend to its full implications. If sin "must needs be", then in fact she (and all human beings, even saints of God) will continue to sin--to do the very thing that she does not want to do, i.e., to inflict pain on her Beloved. Nevertheless, Jesus promises her that he "keeps" her even in

⁴⁷ The idea of "happy fault" (felix culpa) or "behovable sin", expressed in this passage, is characteristic of Augustinian theology and is not uncommon in Julian's day. It is cited by the character Repentance in Piers the Ploughman and forms part of the Easter Vigil (Holy Saturday) liturgy (the canticle Exsultet). Cf. Langland, op. cit., pp. 75 and 275, n. 42.

her sin, which sin she will not be able to avoid:

God brought to mind that I would sin. But because of the liking that I had in beholding him, I did not attend promptly to that shewing. But our Lord in his great mercy abode, and gave me the grace to attend. This shewing I took for myself, individually; but by all the gracious comfort that followed, as you shall see, I was taught to take it for all my even-christians...Here I conceived a gentle fear; but to it our Lord answered, "I keep thee full surely". This word was spoken with more love and assuredness of ghostly keeping than I can or may tell of. For just as it was first shewed to me that I would sin, for all my even-christians, right so was shewed the comfort, the sureness of keeping. (ch. 37, p. 107).

Julian's "gentle fear" at discovering that she would not cease to sin is mitigated by the words of comfort that she receives at the same time. This forms a central point for her faith from here on, in the Revelations: that though we sin, we are loved; though we desire not to sin, we shall continue to sin--and to be "kept" through the experience, by God's Love.

4. For those who love God, the experience of "falling" in sin and in pain is turned to our own good.

When she is shown that she will sin, she is shown at the same time that "all shall be well". These two revelations, she says, must be taken together in order for the whole truth of our relationship to God to be expressed. A knowledge of our sin alone produces only anxiety; while a knowledge of our "keeping" alone produces arrogance or disobedience (ch. 52). In a moment, we shall follow her argument in more detail, that it is better to contemplate God's love for us than our own sin (a point which we touched upon before, in our discussion of "beholding"). She refers to the contemplation of God's Love as a "higher beholding"; on the other hand, it is important to be aware of our sin, because it keeps us from pride, and teaches us to turn to God:

...this was shewed: that in falling and in rising we are preciousely kept in the same love. For in the beholding of God we fall not, and

in the beholding of ourselves we stand not. And both these be truth, as I see it. But the beholding of our Lord God is the higher truth...It is full profitable to us that we see these both at once. For the higher beholding keepeth us in ghostly joy, and true enjoying in God. The other, that is, the lower beholding, keepeth us in dread, and maketh us ashamed of ourselves. (ch. 82, p. 205).

The experience of contrition--being "ashamed of ourselves"--is valuable, insofar as it causes us to rely on God. If we were not aware of God's Love and his desire to bring us true joy, however, shame for our sin would not be helpful; and sin would produce only pain. For Julian, the Christian experience of contrition is brought about by an awareness of God's Love. This is the distinction between contrition, which turns us to God, and dread, which is an awareness only of sin apart from "beholding" God:

Our Lord of his mercy sheweth us our sin and our feebleness, by the sweet gracious light of himself...It is his will that we have knowing of four things: the first is, that he is the ground, of whom we have all our life and our being; the second is, that he keepeth us mightily and mercifully during the time that we are in our sin, amongst all the enemies that come full fiercely upon us (we are so much the more in peril because we give them occasion, and know not our own need); the third is, how courteously he keepeth us, and maketh us to know that we go amiss; the fourth is how steadfastly he abideth us, and changeth not his regard. For it is his will that we be converted and oned to him in love, as he is to us. And thus, by his gracious knowing, we can see that our sin is profitable, without despairing. For truly we need to see it; and by the sight we should be made ashamed of ourselves, and broken down with regard to our pride and presumption. For it behoveth us truly to see that of ourselves we are right naught but sin and wretchedness. (ch. 77, p. 197).

It is only in the sense that the pain of sin turns us to a greater dependence upon God, in contrition, that it becomes clear why "sin must needs be". In saying this, we need to bear in mind continually the two characteristics of human nature: first, that human beings are the highest of God's creatures (Julian says, for example, that "...he willeth us to know that the noblest thing that ever he made is mankind...", ch. 53); second, that our

capacity to reason and to love, even in the likeness of God, is always in the context of our total dependence upon God for every good thing in life. In sin and its consequent pain, we are made aware of our weakness, or "littleness"--our dependence upon God. She argues, therefore, that in contrition we learn humility, which is essential if we are to participate in God's Love.

In chapter 61 she summarizes this argument, beginning with her certainty (shared by all souls-to-be-saved, who know God's Love) that we are "kept" in the condition of sin:

And when we fall, hastily he raiseth us by the clasping of his love and the touching of his grace. And when we are strengthened by his sweet working, then we deliberately choose him, by his grace, to be his servants and his lovers, lastingly without end. (ch. 61, p. 166).

The experience of deliberately choosing to be Christ's servants is, as we have seen, vital if we are to know him in love; yet it is a product of his own grace. Next, even when we choose Jesus (as, for example, in "beholding"--Julian's experience of looking to the cross, rather than elsewhere, described in ch. 19) we are allowed to sin, so that we will eventually turn to him even more strongly:

And yet, after this, he suffereth some of us to fall more hard and more grievously than ever we did before--or so it would seem. And then we think (for we are not all wise) that all we have begun is brought to naught. But it is not so. For we needs must fall; and we needs must see it. For if we fell not, we should never know how feeble and wretched we are, of ourselves...By the experience of this falling we shall have an high and a marvellous knowing of love in God, without end. For staunch and marvellous is that love, which cannot or will not be broken because of trespass. (ch. 61, p. 166).

At the close of this passage, she observes that the depth of God's Love is revealed precisely in our sin, our "trespass"--because it is deep love, and not mere infatuation, which persists in the face of pain and rejection. This is the love of a Mother, whose love is responsible love--and which love involves

pain. She goes on to point out the importance of being aware of our sin, our weakness; for without this awareness, our "falling", as we have observed, would be of no value:

This was one understanding that was profitable. Another is the lowliness and meekness that we shall get by the sight of our falling. For thereby we shall highly be raised in heaven--to which we could never come without that meekness. And therefore we need to see it. (ch. 61, p. 166).

Again, she stresses the importance of turning to God, our Mother, when we become aware of our sin. Sin is of use to us if we run to Jesus for healing, and only then:

But oftentimes, when our falling and our wretchedness is shewed to us, we are sore adread, and so greatly ashamed of ourselves, that we scarcely know where to put ourselves. Yet even then our courteous Mother willeth not that we flee away: nothing could be more displeasing to him. Rather, he willeth us to behave as a child. For when it is distressed and afraid, it runneth hastily to the mother. And if it can do naught else, it cryeth to the mother for help, with all its might. So will he have us behave as the meek child, saying thus: "My kind Mother, my gracious Mother, my most dear Mother, have mercy on me. I have made myself foul and unlike to thee; and I cannot or may not amend it but with thine help and grace. (ch. 61, p. 167).

Evidently, Julian's observations here come from her own experience of child-minding, and what she says will ring true to those readers who are familiar with the trials and joys of small children. Her observations are not facile, but practical and penetrating. If we wonder, for example, why God does not do what we would like--to remove all pain or disappointment of sin from us--we are like children who demand to have their own way from their mother. She reasons that a wise mother, far from giving the child what he demands or what he sees as reasonable, gives the child what is best for him. Sometimes this means disciplining the child, or leaving him to his own devices, to grow through the experience of failure or pain:

And if we do not feel eased at once, then we may be sure that he useth the way of a wise mother. For if he sees that it is for our profit to mourn and to weep, he suffereth that, with ruth and pity--until the right time, out of love. (ch. 66, p. 167).

Finally, she emphasizes once more that the office of our Mother is to heal us, to look after us for our best interest. Pain comes from what is not-God--from our own contrariness and failure to trust, for example, which reflects the sin in which we live. But God heals both the pain and the disease itself, in the way that is ultimately best for us:

For he, in all this working, fulfilleth the office of a kind nurse that hath naught else to do but to attend to the well-being of her child. It is his office to save us: it is his worship to do it, and it is his will that we know it. For he willeth that we love him sweetly, and trust in him meekly and mightily. And this shewed he in these glorious words, "I keep thee full surely". (ch. 61, p. 167).

We have followed Julian's argument through ch. 61 at some length, because it is one of her most important in the Revelations; and her famous "sin must needs be" cannot be understood apart from it. Elsewhere she will echo her conviction that sin, and its consequent pain, is permitted so that we might be aware of our need for God's Love:

And also, in the same shewing where I saw that I would sin, there was I learned to be full of dread for unsureness of myself. For I know not how I shall fall; and I know not the measure nor the greatness of my sin. (ch. 79, p. 199).

Always, in her understanding of sin as necessary for our up-bringing in God's Love, sin itself is seen as evil and to be abhorred; but for the soul who turns to God, sin is turned to the opportunity for obedience, and for maturing in God's sight. Once more, she argues for our relationship to God in Christ as that of children to a loving Mother:

But let us not be adread of this [the horror of sin] except in as much as dread may speed us; but meekly make we our moan to our most dear Mother. And he shall all besprinkle us in his precious blood,

and make our soul full soft and full mild, and heal us to full fairness in the process of time--for thus it is most worship to him, and joy to us without end.

And of this sweet fair working he shall never cease nor stint himself until all his most dear children be born and brought forth... Thus in our true Mother Jesus our life is grounded... And in the taking of our kind he quickened us; and in his blessed dying upon the cross he bore us to endless life. And from that time, and now, he feedeth us and furthereth us, and ever shall until doomsday: right as the high sovereign kindness of Motherhood willeth, and the kindly need of children demeaneth. (ch. 63, p. 170).

If pain, in the condition of sin, has the effect of turning us to Christ (through the grace of the Spirit), it simultaneously has the effect of turning us away from what is evil. She depicts this turning away in strongest terms: as a hatred for evil, which hatred we share with God. To know that we will sin, and that the condition of sin is pain, and that God has "suffered" this, does not alter the fact that sin is, in itself, vile and destructive to life. The more we become aware of our sin in light of Christ, the more we come to appreciate its truly evil nature. In the same chapters in which Julian emphasizes our turning to Christ in the condition of pain, she also emphasizes the hatred which a "lover of Christ" comes to feel for sin itself:

...it belongeth to us to love our God, in whom we have our being; him reverently thanking and praising for our making; mightily praying to our Mother for mercy and pity, and to our Lord the Holy Ghost for help and grace. For in these three is all our life--kind, mercy, and grace; whereof we have mildness, patience and pity, and hating of sin and wickedness. For it belongeth properly to the virtues to hate sin and wickedness. (ch. 59, p. 162).

Again, sin becomes horrible in our sight as we desire to share in the likeness of God--to be loving, as he is loving:

And when we, by the mercy of God and with his help, accord ourselves to kind and to grace, we shall see truly that sin is worse, more vile and more painful than hell--there is no comparison; it is contrary to our fair kind. For as truly as sin is unclean, as truly sin is unkind. All this is a horrible thing to see for the loving soul that would be all fair and shining in the sight of God, as kind and grace teacheth. (ch. 63, p. 170).

Earlier, we said that the experience of "falling" in sin is not to be understood in terms of punishment for our individual transgressions. Julian never argues, for example, that one becomes ill because he has done something "wrong"; or, conversely, that those who obey God fully will not suffer. At the same time she will say, in light of what we have just seen, that in this life we can expect to suffer precisely because God wishes for us to be rid of sin, and to know him in a deep, abiding love--the love that is deepened through pain. In this sense, it is the case that God permits us to suffer in concrete ways--for example, as she suffers in her illness--which suffering is not a punishment, but a means of drawing us closer to him:

On every person that he loveth, in order to bring them to his bliss, he layeth something, which, though it is of no offence in his sight, is a reason why they are humbled and despised in this world, scorned and mocked and cast out. This he doeth to prevent their taking harm of the pomp and of the pride and of the vain glory of this wretched life, and to make ready the way for them to come to heaven in bliss that shall last without end. For he says: "I shall wholly break you of your vicious pride; and after that I shall gather you and make you meek and mild, clean and holy by oneing you to me." And then I saw that all the kind compassion that a man hath for his even-christians with charity--this is Christ in him. (ch. 28, p. 93).

In this passage, she alludes to a kind of suffering, in fact, which comes about when we are nearest to Christ: the suffering which resembles the cross, in "despising" and "scorning", and so on. Here, she illustrates the pain that comes about when one is open in love to those who do not love, as Jesus is open in his Love towards the men who crucify him. The relationship of communion with others in love, in this life, does not result in the bliss which we see in the communion of the Trinity; but in pain, in "casting out"--our own participation in the crucifixion, teaching us to love humbly and fully as Jesus loves.

It will now be possible to understand how, for Julian, sin can be at once be "necessary", and a "scourge". If the object of our life is for us to share in the Love of the Trinity, then it would be of no value at all for us to fear God, as the source of our punishment: this, indeed, would not even correspond to the truth, for it is sin which produces pain, and not God. The closer we come to God, and see the Love which we are meant to have, the greater we suffer from our "falling" into sin; and the more we seek to avoid it. Thus sin begins to be self-defeating; it is similar to the way in which fear of pain keeps a child from putting his hand in a fire--for while the child may at first fear discipline from his mother, he later learns to avoid the thing itself which causes pain, and which is not good for him:⁴⁸

Sin is the sharpest scourge that any chosen soul can be smitten with--a scourge which greatly afflicteth a man or woman, breaketh him in pieces and purgeth him of his self-love; to the extent that at times he thinketh himself fit for nothing but to sink into hell; until such time as, by the touching of the Holy Ghost, contrition overtaketh him and turneth his bitterness into hope in God's mercy. Then his wounds begin to heal and his soul to revive as he is converted to the life of Holy Church. The Holy Ghost leadeth him to confession to reveal his sins willingly, nakedly and truly; with great sorrow and with great shame for having so befouled the fair image of God. (ch. 39, p. 109).

The result of this new contrition and suffering from sin is the desire for obedience--which, for Julian, is expressed by obedience to the canons of the Church--and a new patience for suffering, in all circumstances;

⁴⁸ Commenting on the concept of sin as a "sharp scourge", one student of the *Revelations* argues that in fact it is nothing of the kind, since "our sins are all too easily borne". (Thornton, *op. cit.*, p. 214). Surely this is to miss Julian's point altogether. She describes an experience unique to the "lover of God", as opposed to one who still lives in such a way that sin does not appear to be especially painful--or who loves sin. Julian refers to such as "the Devil's sort" (ch. 33); but the fact that one is not aware of the pain of sin does not alter the fact that sin is an illness which produces great pain. (e.g., one might be neurotic without being aware of the fact.)

Then he undertaketh penance for all his sins enjoined by his confessor, who is instructed in Holy Church by the teaching of the Holy Ghost. This is a meekness that greatly pleaseth God. He also meekly taketh bodily sickness that is of God's sending, and the sorrow and shame coming from without, of the reproof and despising of the world, with all manner of annoyance and temptation that may fall upon us, ghostly or bodily. (ch. 39, p. 109).

Finally, we may return to her observation that our "falling" in sin is to be understood only in light of our "keeping" in Christ. Sin produces contrition in us, and the desire for faithfulness to Christ (if indeed we are his "lovers"); but in turning us to Christ, it is the opportunity for our joy, because we see what Christ has done for us, in giving himself to us in love:

So we have now matter for mourning, because our sin is the cause of Christ's pains; and we have, lastingly, matter for joy, because endless love made him to suffer. And therefore the creature that seeth and feeleth the working of love, by grace, hateth naught except sin. (Of all things, in my sight, love and hate are the hardest and most immeasurable contraries).

But notwithstanding all this, I saw and understood in our Lord's meaning that we cannot, in this life, keep ourselves from sin all wholly and in full cleanness, as we shall be in heaven. (ch. 52, p. 145).

By turning the situation of pain and sin from one of despair to one of contrition, and dependence upon God's love, the Spirit "ones" us to himself; and we are strengthened in his love.

5. God never allows his beloved to fall too far.

Julian tells us that there were moments, during her Revelations, when the pain which she experienced seemed too great for her to bear. One of these moments came during her first experience of compassion, when she gazed on the crucified Lord (ch. 17). Another was her direct experience of evil, in the appearance of the "fiend" to her during the night (Julian's last Revelation, ch. 67-68). In the former she cried out, wondering whether there could be any greater pain than that which she felt. As we have seen, the answer was that

despair is greater; and indeed, in the temptation to despair which she experienced in the final Revelation, she discovered how great that pain can be. But she was not overcome by pain, either in her body, or in the pain of compassion or of contrition: not in the despair which she felt in the assault of the fiend. In this, she learned that we are truly "kept full surely" by our Mother. We are never allowed to fall (either in sin or in pain) in such a way that we are permanently harmed).

There are two ways in which she sees our "keeping", such that we do not ultimately fall to sin and to pain. The first has to do with our will--that is, our assent to sin. For her, the Christian never fully assents to sin, even though he commits "sins" and obviously assents to sin at the moment. We saw earlier that, in her view, our entire life is our "prayer" before God. By definition, the soul-to-be-saved is one whose entire life is oriented towards God in Christ, even though he continues to fall to sin. This identity of ourselves with Christ is accomplished by the Spirit at work in us; and she describes it as Christ dwelling in our souls. Our permanent relationship to God in Christ, therefore, is not merely a disposition of our wills, but is a bond established by God, which we cannot destroy. The experience of genuine contrition, in which we are not only sorry for our disobedience, but hate sin itself, is proof of the identification which we have with Christ. To accept the possibility of contrition at all (as opposed to a pure cynicism about any truly spiritual relationship to Christ in love) is to recognize that the Christian does not assent to sin. It is impossible to assent to sin, in Julian's view, and at the same time love Christ.

The second kind of "keeping" which she describes does not have to do with our own will, but with the circumstances into which we are allowed to fall.

She asserts that in any experience of suffering, we are not permitted to be tried beyond our endurance--understanding that "our" ability to withstand suffering, and to be brought to maturity through it, is a work of the Spirit within us, moulding us to himself. The two kinds of "keeping" meet, however, in the same experiences of pain--as, for example, in her experience of pain and despair, brought about by the appearance of the "fiend". Julian tells us that her experience was horrible, and that she cried out for help, thinking that the room was actually on fire. On her discovery, however, that what she saw was a delusion brought on by demons, she exclaimed, "Blessed be God!" (ch. 67). This response seems curious, insofar as we might be inclined to fear the natural phenomenon of fire less than the supernatural one of demons. It is possible only because her will is kept firmly in God (she is able to praise him in the face of naked evil); and because she has passed unharmed through the ordeal, despite its horror.

In the same Revelation (the Sixteenth), her final vision is that all Christians shall be similarly tried, but that they shall not fall:

And all this teaching and this true comfort, it is given generally, to all my even-christians, as is before said. And such is God's will. This word, "Thou shalt not be overcome", was said full sharply and full mightily, for sureness and comfort against all tribulations that may come. He said not "Thou shalt not be troubled, thou shalt not be travailed, thou shalt not be distressed"; but he said "Thou shalt not be overcome". It is God's will that we take heed to these words, and that we be ever mighty in faithful trust in weal and woe. For he loveth us and liketh us; and so willeth he that we love him and like him, and mightily trust in him. And all shall be well. And then all was finished, and I saw no more. (ch. 68, p. 180).

The "tribulations" of which she speaks are not merely physical illnesses, but temptations to sin, and the spiritual suffering that accompanies sin in the soul who loves God. She sees clearly that the lover of Christ will be kept from sinning in such a way that he destroys his relationship to God:

The soul that shall come to heaven is so precious to God, and the place itself is so worshipful, that the goodness of God never permitteth a soul that shall come thither to sin finally. (ch. 38, p. 108).

It has been argued, that the word "finally" may have been added to Julian's manuscript at a later date by a copyist.⁴⁹ If so, Julian's own point would be that God does not permit a Christian to sin at all. This seems, however, to be unlikely in view of what she has already said concerning our relationship to sin--for she is expressly given to understand that she and her even-Christians will sin indeed, and will keep on sinning until the time that they enter heaven. The other side of this vision, however, is that even our sin will not prevent us from entering heaven, because of the goodness of God. Interestingly, part of the reason that we shall not be permitted to "sin finally" is the integrity of the place to which we are going. Heaven itself is "worshipful", because it is the full presence of God. Here there is no sin, nor is sin even mentioned in God's presence (ch. 33). This is the "final" state in which we shall not sin, and in which we shall not experience any pain.

It is important to recall that for her, our "keeping" in sin is an ontological relationship which we have to God, and not merely a moral one. To will not to sin, for example, reflects the work of the Spirit in us, and is not

⁴⁹ By Reynolds (AMR, p. 153). The word "fynally" does not appear in the Sloane MSS. However it should be noted that the Sloane MSS are of a later date than the Paris MS (mid 17th-century, late 17th/early 18th-century as opposed to 16th century). It is therefore equally possible that a scribe of different theological outlook omitted the word deliberately or unconsciously--a mistake which is understandable in light of modern attempts to see in Julian the idea that God's "lovers" do not sin. It should be clear, however, that her theology as expressed in the preceding chapters requires the word--since Julian is arguing precisely that the soul-to-be-saved will sin throughout his life.

merely our disposition towards God. She understands a struggle within our being, in which Christ is opposed to evil, which struggle becomes evident in our feelings:

During the time of this life, we have in us a marvellous mingling both of weal and of woe. We have in us our Lord Jesus Christ, up-risen; and we have in us the wretchedness and mischief of Adam's falling. Dying, by Christ we are steadfastly kept; and by touching of grace, we are raised into sure trust of salvation. But by Adam's falling, we are so broken in our feelings, in various ways, by sins and by sundry pains, in which we are made dark and so blind that we can find scarcely any comfort. But in our intentions we abide God, and faithfully trust to have mercy and grace; and this is his own working in us. He, of his goodness, openeth the eye of our understanding: by which sight: sometimes more and sometimes, less, according as God giveth us the ability to receive it. At one time we are lifted up into the first, at another we are suffered to fall into the other. This mingling is so perplexing in us, that we scarcely know, either concerning ourselves, or our fellow-christians, in what way we stand; such is the marvellous nature of these various feelings. (ch. 52, p. 144).

The Christian life, therefore, is a struggle against sin, in which (she goes on to say) we assent to God when we see him (as in "beholding"); and because Christ "is our Keeper, we assent never" to sin. Part of the pain which we experience as Christians is the desire to see God clearly, when we do not; and the desire not to sin, when we do.

The ontological nature of our "keeping" means that we are preserved from sin (in a permanent sense) even when we do not perceive the work of the Spirit in us. First of all, our "keeping" does not depend upon how fully we are aware of it, nor even upon the extent to which we consciously assent to God. It is not that we love God and thereby avoid sin; but that God loves us enough to draw us to himself, in spite of sin, and even through the experience of it:

In that time he shewed our frailty and our falling, our being broken and despoiled, our being crossed and accused: and all our woe, as far forth as methought could ever befall us in this life. But with it he keepeth us, in this time, as tenderly and as sweetly (for his

worship) and as surely unto our salvation, as he doth when we are most in solace and comfort. And with that he raiseth us ghostly and highly in heaven; and turneth all to his worship and to our joy, without end. (ch. 62, p. 168).

At times, the soul-to-be-saved will not even recognize that he is being "kept" by God's Love. This is because, in "falling", we lose sight of God: we see only ourselves, from the perspective of sin (suggested by the vision of the servant who, having fallen, is neither able to rise nor to turn his head, to see the Lord).⁵⁰ In this circumstance we are robbed of our joy in Christ, and sin manifests itself in our own attitudes: in anxiety, in self-accusation, and in the despair which is a loss of faith. In the soul-to-be-saved, however, these are never permitted by God to be typical of our lives, or our permanent state:

But now I needs must tell you in what manner I saw deadly sin in those creatures who would not die because of sin, but would live without end in the joy of God. I saw that two contraries could not be together in one place. The greatest contraries that there are, are the highest bliss and the deepest pain. The highest bliss there is, is to have God in clearness of endless light, him truly seeing, him sweetly feeling, him all perfectly having, in fullness of joy. Thus was this blissful look of our Lord God shewed, in part. In which shewing I saw that sin was its greatest contrary: so far forth that as long as we have anything to do with sin, we shall never see clearly this blissful look of God. And the more horrible and grievous our sins are, the deeper we are, for that time, out of his blessed sight. And therefore it seemeth to us, oftentimes, as though we were in peril of death and in part of hell; because of the sorrow and pain that sin meaneth to us. And thus we are dead for the time--out of very sight of our blissful life.

But in all this I saw, in faith, that we are not dead in the sight of God, and he passeth never away from us...Thus I saw how, with regard to those blessed creatures of endless life, sin is deadly for a short time. (ch. 72, p. 185).

If sin is absolutely contrary to the Holy Spirit, it is clear to Julian

50 Ch. 51, p. 133. The servant cannot look upon the Lord "in whom is full comfort."

that wherever the Spirit is at work, sin and pain are overcome--pain being healed, and sin displaced. This is evident in our lives when, for example, joy and peace replace wrath or despair. Thus there is a steady transfiguration of our lives, through the grace of the Spirit. The moments in which we assent consciously to the work of the Spirit let us know that in fact we are being "kept" through all time:

Our good Lord the Holy Ghost, who is endless life dwelling in our soul full truly, keepeth it and worketh therein a peace, and bringeth it to ease by grace, and maketh it docile to God, and in accord with him. This is the way of mercy in which our good Lord continually leadeth us as long as we are in this changeable life...

Wrath is naught else but a frowardness and a contrariness to peace and love, which cometh of failing of might, or of wisdom, or of goodness; which failing is not in God, but on our part. For we, by sin and wretchedness, have in us a wrath and a continual contrariness to peace and to love. This shewed he full often in his lovely look of ruth and pity. For the ground of mercy is in love: and the working of mercy is in our being kept in love. (ch. 48, p. 127).

In the same chapter, Julian describes how the work of the Spirit destroys wrath in us, and replaces pain with "bliss". The result of our having passed through the experience of pain and into the experience of joy in Christ, is that we shall thank him for all that he has done:

For I saw full truly that ever as our contrariness worketh unto us, here on earth, pain, shame and sorrow: right so, and contrariwise, grace worketh unto us, in heaven, solace, worship, bliss, to overflowing; so far forth, that when we shall go up and receive that sweet reward which grace hath wrought, there we shall thank and bless our Lord endlessly, rejoicing that ever we suffered woe. This property of blessed love we shall know in God, which we might never have known, had not woe gone before. When I saw all this, I needs must grant that the mercy of God and the forgiveness slaketh and wasteth our wrath. (ch. 48, p. 128).

Julian's conviction that God is keeping us in Love, even when we feel that we are "falling" out of his grasp, is repeated numerous times throughout the Revelations, not least in her exclamations of praise in the midst of her own suffering in illness. In the Fourteenth Revelation she summarises

her faith that God is indeed our "Maker, Keeper and Lover" in a concise description of salvation. Salvation is a healing by the Spirit which, as we have seen, is not always obvious to us; yet which at the same time becomes clear whenever we take on a likeness to Christ. This lets us know that we are never out of God's grasp. Continuing, then, from the passage which we have just seen, she describes the faith which we can have:

I saw full truly that all our endless friendship, our station, our life and our being, is in God. The same endless goodness which keepeth us, when we sin, so that we perish not, that same endless goodness continually treateth with us unto peace, against our wrath and our contrarious falling. It maketh us to see our need, and, with true dread, mightily to seek unto God to have forgiveness, with a gracious desire of our salvation. For we cannot be blessedly saved until we be truly in peace and love: which itself is our salvation. And though, by the wrath and the contrariness that is in us, we are now in tribulation, distress and woe through falling into blindness and helplessness, yet we are sure and safe by the merciful keeping of God which preventeth our perishing. (ch. 49, p. 129).

6. Evil itself is made to serve God, in transfiguring our lives.

Julian's final word on the problem of evil and pain is to describe once more the transfiguration which takes place in us by the Spirit, such that evil and suffering work only to our good and to the purposes of God. In what follows, we should bear in mind that Julian is not writing a speculative philosophy about what might happen in the situation of suffering. Rather, she is describing her own experience, and suggests that this experience can be normative for everyone who loves God. What she describes is the instance in which a human being suffers greatly, but sees his suffering turn to joy. Here Julian points out again and again that apart from love for Christ, and absolute dependence upon him, the experience of great suffering only brings about bitterness and despair.

Once more, we recall that her vision of suffering begins in her vision

of the crucifixion, rather than in reflection on her own illness. The same vision of suffering, however, is also a vision of the transfiguration. We have already noted the passage in which she describes the transfiguration which she saw, and which she consequently underwent herself. (ch. 21, p. 82). Here, the vision of Jesus' intense suffering, such that it is infinite as his love is infinite, is replaced by a vision of his intense joy, in his great love. Just as she understands the experience of pain, for the Christian, to be a sharing in Jesus' own pains, she sees the promise of our sharing in his joy:

The soul that beholdeth this /the passion/ when touched by his grace shall truly see that these pains of Christ's passion pass all other pains; and that all these other pains shall be turned into everlasting joy by the power of Christ's passion. (ch. 20, p. 81).

The extent to which we are able to participate in Christ's joy in this life depends to some degree on the "beholding" which we have of him--i.e., whether we look to him in love, trusting in his love for us. Even so, we only know God in this life through a crucified Christ. This means that our conformation to him involves conformation to his pain, as well as to his joy.

It follows that every experience of suffering is potentially one of "bliss": Christ comes to us in pain, in order to lift us out of pain. We should not despair, then, over our sin, because it is wholly within God's providence:

The reward that we receive shall not be little; it shall be high, glorious, and worshipful. And so shall all shame be turned into worship and joy. Our courteous Lord willeth not his servants to despair for often falling or for grievous falling. For our falling preventeth him not from loving us. Peace and love always exist and work in us, though we are not always in peace and in love. But he willeth that we take heed of this, that he is our everlasting Keeper, and mightily defendeth us against these enemies of ours who are full fell and full fierce upon us. (and our need is the greater the more we give them occasion, by our falling). (ch. 39, p. 110).

To say that evil functions wholly within the power of God, and has been permitted by him even though he "defendeth us" against it, is not to say that God in any sense desires it. Julian humorously refers to the power of evil as a kind of "unmight" which struggles against God, because it is utterly alien to God. God, in his Love, turns it wholly to our good:

In this our Lord shewed a part of the fiend's malice and the fulness of his unmight. For he shewed that his passion is the overcoming of the fiend. God shewed that the fiend hath now the same malice that he had before the incarnation. And as sorely as he travaileth, even so continually he seeth that all souls belonging to salvation escape him, worshipfully, by the power of his Jesus' precious passion. That is his sorrow; and most evilly is he afflicted. For all that God suffereth him to do turneth to our joy, and to his shame and pain. (ch. 13, p. 69).

Because we understand that evil has been permitted only for a time, and that we are wholly kept by God's love, she sees that we ought to "scorn" evil (the "fiend"); for whenever we fall to sin, we can defeat evil by turning to our Lord:

And it belongeth to our feebleness and our folly to fall; and it belongeth to the mercy and grace that we have of the Holy Ghost to rise to more joy. And if our enemy winneth ought from us by our falling (and this is his pleasure), he loseth many times more in our rising through charity and meekness. This glorious rising is to him such great sorrow and pain (for the hatred that he hath to our souls) that he burneth continually in envy. And all this sorrow that he would make us have shall turn against himself. And for this reason it was that our Lord scorned him, and shewed that he shall be scorned; and this made me mightily to laugh. (ch. 77, p. 195).

In summary, Julian does not hesitate to say that for those who are being healed in God's Love, evil is being turned to good, which transfiguration is "worship" to God:

For wickedness hath been permitted to rise up contrary to the goodness. But the goodness of mercy and grace stood contrary against that wickedness, and turned all to goodness and worship--unto all that shall be saved. For it is the property in God which doeth good against evil. (ch. 59, p. 161).

The Role of Fear in Transfiguration: Four Kinds of "Dread"

Having established that there are two relationships which we can have to sin and pain--that "in" sin (in which we consent to it) and that "in" Christ (in which we love Christ, and hate sin)--and that pain can be transfigured for us by Christ's love, in the Spirit, Julian gives a concrete example in her analysis of dread. In her last Revelation, she experiences dread through the temptation of the fiend; and in the midst of her description of this experience (ch. 74-76) she digresses, to show how fear itself can be used by God to turn us to himself. Here she depicts how the nature of dread as experienced by one who loves Christ, and trusts in him, is essentially different from that kind of dread which is experienced out of the context of trusting love.

She sees essentially four kinds of fear, or "dread", in life: fear which comes from weakness; fear of pain; "doubtful dread" (which we may loosely think of as anxiety), leading to despair; and "reverent dread", which is its opposite, and may be likened to the respect of a child for his father. Each of these may be thought of in purely ordinary terms: for example, the fear of hurting ourselves, or of dying, is a kind of "fear of pain". At the same time, her categories of fear may be invested with a spiritual sense: e.g., fear of "pain" also refers to the fear of eternal punishment for our sins. Either way, she sees the four kinds of fear as beneficial to us insofar as they turn us to God; and the last two, as pointing to the difference between a life which is disposed to love towards God, and one which is oppressed by a false fear of God.

Her first example of fear is that which comes about in moments of weakness:

One is that state of fear which cometh upon a man suddenly in his frailty. This dread doeth good, because it helpeth to purge a man, as doth sickness or any other pain that is not sin. All such pains help a man if they are patiently accepted. (ch. 74, p. 189).

The immediate context of her insight is her confrontation with the fiend. She assumes that her temptation itself came about because of a moment of weakness on her part: she had denied her Lord, in saying that her visions were "raving" (ch. 66); and subsequently felt guilt and unease for what she had done. She then fell asleep, taking her eyes off of the crucifix for the first time. Her attack by the demonic at this moment represents the human condition of frailty, when we do not have our eyes, as it were, on Christ: at the moment that we lose sight of God, we are vulnerable to fear, which in fact rightly gauges our frailty in the face of evil. This experience is helpful, however, if it turns us away from evil, to look to Christ. As we have already seen, she understands the horror of evil to be self-defeating: by producing fear in us, evil turns us away from itself.

We may also think of her idea here in more concrete terms: when one becomes ill, he may suddenly be aware of his inability to help himself at all. This brings about fear; but at the same time, it makes one aware of his dependence upon God--which awareness is healthy. To recognize that we are utterly dependent upon God is necessary if we are to be truly disposed to him in love; and, as we have observed already, she sees the importance of the "purging" which breaks down our pride, since pride is a forerunner to sin.⁵¹

Her second type of fear most probably represents the fear of eternal damnation. A popular medieval concept represented in literature of Julian's

51 Compare the following passage in Hilton's "Exposition of Psalm 90":

What is evil for the soul, except sin? Truly, nothing else. And what is sin, but the lack of God? Truly, nothing else. And when the soul forsakes God and relies upon itself, its sin is manifestly pride, that which is the beginning of all sins. (Of the Knowledge of Ourselves and of God, op. cit., p. 9).

time is the idea that fear of hell awakens us out of a kind of sleep, in which sleep we were comfortable with sin.⁵² She sees this fear as useful in that it can dispose us to the Spirit:

The second is the dread of pain, by which man is stirred up and awakened from the sleep of sin. For the man that is hard asleep in sin is not able, at the time, to receive the soft strengthening of the Holy Ghost until he hath felt this fear of pain, of bodily death, and of ghostly enemies. This dread moveth us to seek comfort and mercy of God. And thus this dread helpeth us as giving us an entry, enabling us to come to contrition through the blissful touching of the Holy Ghost. (ch. 74, p. 189).

It is to be noted that Julian does not see the naked fear of hell as producing contrition. The "blissful touching of the Holy Ghost" brings about contrition, although fear of the pain of hell might make us open to the Spirit. She understands that to see hell on its own (for example, to be threatened with hell as an alternative to faith) merely produces anxiety. On the other hand, to be comfortable in sin, (even though this "comfort" is only apparent in the condition of the grave illness which is sin) is to be closed to the work of the Spirit.

The third kind of fear is, like the others, undesirable in itself; but it has been permitted so that it might turn us to God:

The third is doubtful dread. In as much as it leadeth to despair, God willeth to have it turned to love in us, by true knowing of love; that is to say, that the bitterness of doubt be turned into the sweetness of kind love, by grace. For it can never please our Lord that he servants doubt in his goodness. (ch. 74, p. 190).

This kind of dread is "doubtful", because it is the doubt that God is really

52 Ibid., p. 2:

...You, Lord, touched me with Your blessed light, You raised me up from where I lay, You made my eyes to see how horrible my sins were, You gave me true contrition and complete rejection of my sin, You turned my whole heart to You and made it love You.

our Keeper and our Lover. It is to accept suffering as evidence that there is no God, or that God does not love us, or that God can do nothing about suffering; or it may be to accept the idea that we are too sinful to be loved by a righteous and holy God. She deftly notes that this kind of doubt can produce only bitterness: either we are filled with anxiety, and complain against God (or the situations which we have to face in life, which bring about pain); or else we quietly resign ourselves to suffering, thinking that there is no alternative, which is itself a kind of bitterness.

Here she expands her earlier vision of two kinds of sin or "sickness" in life (ch. 73). These were described as "impatience", which is also to be identified with "sloth"; and doubtful dread" (as we have just described it) which Julian links with despair. What she calls "impatience" and "sloth" are two human reactions to pain: complaining bitterly, or else giving up hope altogether. These are really symptomatic for, or concurrent with, the kind of fear which is "doubtful dread"--a fear which we might call "fear of God", in a pejorative sense. When we carry our impatience, or our resignation, over into our understanding of God--to doubt God's existence or his goodness or his power--we open ourselves to true despair. For if there is no God, or if God does not love us, or if God cannot act (or does not act continually) in our lives, then truly there is no hope for a better life than the life of pain, of bitterness, and of loneliness in the face of death.⁵³ To put this another way, we might

53 Piers the Ploughman (Book XIII) personifies this despair, known as "impatience" or "sloth" to Julian, in the person of Glutton:

Moreover this Glutton had spattered his garments with great oaths, and drabbled them in the slime of deceitful talk, throwing the name of God about idly, and swearing till the sweat drenched his jacket. And he had eaten and drunk more than his belly could take, and made himself so sick with surfeiting, that he was in terror of dying in mortal sin. Then he would fall into despair, and give up all hope

say that, for her despair is to see suffering and death as the ultimate realities of life--which is no life at all. Although these ideas are sometimes passed for a kind of "holiness", they are in fact subtle opponents to true faith. Their opposite is what she describes as "sweetness of kind love": not "fear of God" in the sense of hiding from a wrathful God; but love of a child for his parent, which love comes about by "grace". Throughout the Revelations she makes this observation, that only love can produce love. Fear produces only greater fear--unless, in our fear, we turn to God to experience his love.

Now we have come to Julian's fourth kind of "dread", which is the opposite of "doubtful dread". This is "reverent dread", the experience of fear in the context of faith ("reverence") as opposed to doubt:

There is no dread in us that fully pleaseth God, but reverent dread. It is full soft; for the more it is had, the less it is felt, because of the sweetness of love. Love and dread are bretheren; and they are rooted in us by the goodness of our Maker; they shall never be taken from us without end. It belongeth to us, of kind, to love; and of grace, to love; and of kind, to dread; and of grace, to dread. It belongeth to the Goodness to be loved. And it belongeth to us that are his servants and his children to dread him in his Lordship and Fatherhood, as it belongeth to us to love him in Goodness. And though this reverent dread and love are not both-in-one, but two in property and working, yet neither of them may be had without the other. And therefore I am sure that he who loveth, dreadeth--though he feels it but little. (ch. 74, p. 190).

Her own words are simple and beautiful, and need little in the way of explanation. We should be aware, however, of her reference to the Trinity in this passage: "Lordship" referring to the Son, "Fatherhood" to the Father, and "Goodness" to God the Holy Spirit. In a proper relationship to God, we respect him as his children, not taking our freedom in his love too lightly,

of salvation--a sloth so deadly that no medieval can cure it, and even the mercy of God cannot help such a man on his deathbed. (Langland, op. cit., p. 163).

or irresponsibly (an argument she makes elsewhere--cf. ch. 52--that we should neither despair of his love, nor be "over-reckless" in it). We respect the Father, and we respect the Son in whom we know the Father (remembering that the Son is, towards us, our true Mother). We do not know the Spirit in the same way, because the Spirit is given to us: he is the means by which we live, and the "grace" by which we can love. Therefore we "dread" God the Father and God the Son; but we love God "in Goodness", that is, by the Holy Spirit. The capacity to love and to fear is part of our human nature. To love and fear God, however, is the gift of God; and, because he is God, and we are creatures--his children--love in the Spirit is always accompanied by "reverent dread", the respect that is "full soft" and is "sweet" in God's Love.

In the remainder of ch. 74 and in the chapters which follow (particularly ch. 76) she drives home her conviction that any temptation to "fear" God in any other sense is not from the Holy Spirit, but is demonic. We are sometimes taught to fear God as our Judge; but if this fear turns us away from God, it is wrong (or "mingled with wrong", because it is true that God is our Judge, but not true that we cannot face him with confidence and love). The particular temptation of the fiend is, in fact, to confront us with our sin, to convince us that we cannot be acceptable to God: to fill us with despair. We shall say more about this with regard to her view of the nature of guilt and of judgement, because it is a fundamental aspect of Julian's theology which is especially relevant today. Julian's principle point here is that if we find ourselves full of anxiety, or bitterness, or glum resignation, we should turn ourselves to God's love, and be confident in it. If we find that we are "afraid" of God--rather than being reverent, which is the companion of true love--then we do not know the true God, who is only Love.

Transfiguration in Death

The greatest occasion for the transfiguration of evil into good is death. We have seen that in one of her visions, Julian witnessed the moment of Christ's death on the cross. Although she knew that he was dying, she did not see his death, but instead witnessed his transfiguration (ch. 21). Later on, in the Fifteenth Revelation (ch. 64-65) she is told by Christ that she, too, will be taken from pain, from sickness, from anxiety and "woe", quite suddenly. This vision refers, on the one hand, to the moment of her death--which she has seen as the occasion for dread. At the same time, it refers to her transfiguration, the moment in which she takes on the likeness of Christ fully, in eternal life. Consequently she understands death to be a great blessing: our final deliverance from every kind of pain. At the same time, this means that she is able to live now without anxiety--not resigned to suffering, but open to the experience of Joy in the midst of suffering. Jesus says to her:

"Suddenly thou shalt be taken from all thy pain, from all thy sickness, from all thy distress and from all thy woe...And thou shalt never more have any manner of pain, nor any manner of sickness, nor any manner of disliking, nor any wanting of will; but ever joy and bliss without end. Why then should it grieve thee to suffer a while, since it is my will, and for my working? (ch. 64, p. 172).

Julian speaks, therefore, of patient suffering--which "patience" is not to be understood as a kind of stoicism, but as suffering in anticipation. At every moment, the Christian looks for the work of the Spirit in the experiences of life--even of suffering; and at every moment he anticipates deliverance from the realm of suffering altogether. In her "shewing" she learns that we do not know the time of our deliverance, because otherwise we would grow weary of life in the meantime, or impatient, and fail to attend to the immediate task of growing in God's love--or working God's will for the sake of others in our own suffering ("since it is my will, and for my working"). It is important to notice

that, for her, the continuous expectation of transfiguration does not mean that we turn from life as we now know it (with the attitude, for example, that this life is not good and is only to be endured); nor do we cling to the present life, seizing every moment as though it were our last. Rather, we see each moment of pain as potentially a moment of transfiguration, and each moment of life as part of our movement to eternal life. To be patient in this life is to understand that transfiguration is taking place already; and it is this patience which is rewarded:

And in this word "suddenly thou shalt be taken", I saw that God rewardeth man for the patience that he hath in abiding God's will and his time, and that man stretcheth his patience across the time of his living, through the unknowing of the time of his passing. This is of great profit. For if man knew his time, he would not have patience over that time. (ch. 64, p. 172).

Recalling her vision of the hazelnut, she goes on to say that this life, and the suffering in it, is but a "point" in light of eternity.⁵⁴

The imagery in Julian's Fifteenth Revelation is striking, and calls to mind once more the fact that she is writing in the midst of a time of great suffering, not only in her own illness but in the culture in which she lived. She has a vision of a dead body lying in the mud--possibly the body of a child, although she does not say. Then she sees the soul departing the body, ascending to heaven. One important feature of her vision is that the soul which she sees, ascends bodily--it is not a phantom, but a whole person, an infant. This

⁵⁴ Compare the Ancrene Riwle, IV:

God knows, dear sisters, all the pain of this world, compared with hell, is a very slight suffering. It is nothing but playing at ball; it is all just the size of a small drop of dew compared with the wide sea and all the waters of the world. (Riwle, p. 80).

Julian's comparison, however, is with heaven--not with hell!

is a vision of the resurrection, rather than the vision we might expect (or which Julian expected to see, at Christ's death) of a soul leaving a body. At the same time, her vision is realistic in the extreme: the body which she "sees" may be more than a vision, because she lived in a time when, because of the Plague and the filth which attended it, a body might well have lain in sight of her window. The vision is both horrible and beautiful:

And in this time I saw a body lying on the earth. Which body was a heavy, fearful sight, without shape or form--a bloated mass of stinking mud. And suddenly, out of this body sprang a full fair creature, a little child fully shapen and quickly glided up into heaven. The bloated mass of the body betokeneth the great wretchedness of our mortal flesh; and the littleness of the child betokeneth the cleanness and the purity of our soul. And I thought: "With this body this child's fairness cannot remain: nor can any foulness of body dwell with this child". (ch. 64, p. 172).

She concludes that the lover of Christ cannot remain in the situation of sin and pain, because purity cannot remain with filth, the shapeless non-being of evil. Yet her expectation is not that pain shall be taken away from us--which would always leave the possibility for its return--but that humanity shall be taken out of the milieu of pain, into the place where pain is an impossibility. The imagery is, of course, rich with connotations in Christian spiritual tradition--particularly of the "rebirth" of the soul, in the Spirit--and sharply defines what Julian has in mind as the transfiguration which comes about by grace. The dramatic vision of the infant is also reminiscent, once more, of Julian's depiction of Christ as our Mother, who has given birth to humanity and brings it through pain into fulness of joy.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ On quite another level, her image of the infant ascending may be to challenge the prevalent idea that unbaptised infants who died would descend immediately into hell. Hilton argues this in the Scale, Bk. II, ch. 6.

The most definitive description of transfiguration in the Revelations is the vision of the "Lord and servant". In this vision, Julian sees Jesus' "falling" in the crucifixion as the occasion for his glorification. Similarly, Adam's fall is the occasion for his healing, or salvation: he is raised to a greater state than before. This stands for all the souls who are raised with Christ from death into life. We sin and we die; nevertheless we are his "crown":

Now standeth not the Son before the Father, as a servant before the Lord in awe, and half-naked; but he standeth before the Father, on an equality, richly clothed in blissful fullness, with a crown upon his head of precious richness. For it was shewed that we are his crown--the crown which is the Father's joy, the Son's worship, the Holy Ghost's liking, and endless marvellous bliss to all that are in heaven. (ch. 51, p. 143).

If death becomes the opportunity for our greatest glory--what Julian refers to as "uplifting" in the Spirit--then there is nothing on earth which can frighten the soul-to-be-saved. To see suffering, and even the prospect of death, in the perspective of transfiguration is what Julian calls "naughting". This is the attitude towards the world which views the world with love, but which sees nothing in the world as ultimate truth, or ultimate pain, or ultimate rest. In the vision of the "hazelnut" Julian argues that the soul can have rest only when it is "naughted" of everything that is made (ch. 5):

...until I am substantially oned to him [to God], I can never have full rest nor true bliss; that is to say, until I am so fastened to him that there is no created thing at all between my God and me...we should reckon as naught everything that is made, to love and have God who is unmade. For this is the reason why we are not all in ease of heart and soul: that we seek here rest in this thing that is so little and where no rest is in; we know not our God that is almighty, allwise and all-good. For he is very rest...no soul can be in rest until it is naughted of everything that is made. When the soul is willingly naughted, for love, so as to have him who is All, then is she able to receive ghostly rest. (ch. 5, p. 53).

In this perspective, there is a genuine freedom from anxiety; and even death becomes the opportunity to be with God in the most intimate sense--with

nothing created to separate us from the Creator. In Eastern spirituality, this attitude of "naughting" is referred to as apatheia: to be "passionless". It does not mean that there are no "passions", or feelings; but that one is passionate for God. Nothing in the world, not even death, can harm this love-relationship with God:⁵⁶

Then I was answered in my reason as though by a friendly mediator: "Take what your Lord God shewed to you as spoken generally, beholding his courtesy. For it is greater worship to God to behold him in all things than in any particular thing." I consented, and there I learned that it is greater worship to God to know all things in general than to shew preference for any thing in particular. And if I would act wisely according to this teaching, I would not be moved to gladness by any one thing in particular, nor be greatly saddened by any thing at all. For "all shall be well"; and the fullness of joy is to behold God in all things. (ch. 35, p. 103).

Julian's theology of suffering, as it is experienced by the soul-to-be-saved, always assumes a "oneing" between ourselves and God, in Christ. In this "oneing", his experience becomes our own: in crucifixion, and in transfiguration into glory. This "oneing" finds its greatest expression in the experience of death, out of which we are raised with Christ. Until the time of

56 On this point Julian is very close to Orthodox spirituality. Lossky, The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church, op. cit., p. 48) describes apatheia as follows:

"The contemplation of this absolute perfection, of this divine plenitude which is the Trinity--God who is personal and who is not a person confined in his own self--the very thought, the mere 'pale shadow of the Trinity', lifts the human soul beyond the world of being, changing and confused, in bestowing upon it this stability in the midst of passions; this serenity, or *ἀπάθεια* which is the beginning of deification. For the creature, subject to change by nature, can by grace attain to the state of eternal stability; can partake of infinite life in the light of the Trinity."

Especially to be noted in Julian is her positive approach to apatheia or "naughting"; i.e., it is not a distaste for the world or an attempt to rid oneself of the world, but stems from a positive contemplation of the Trinity, and a fulfilling of the world, in the believer's eyes.

our transfiguration out of the condition of sin, however, we can do no more than share in the life of love and faith which is Jesus' life, up to and in the crucifixion. The summary of Julian's view of suffering, therefore, is to be found in her concept of contemplative prayer, in which we "behold" Christ (who shows himself to us as a crucified Lord, in whose transfiguration we shall eventually share). Therefore she says:

This vision was a lesson to my understanding, that the continual seeking of the soul pleaseth God much. For it can do no more than seek, suffer and trust; and this is wrought, in every soul that hath it, by the Holy Ghost. But the clearness of the finding--that is of his special grace, whenever it is his will. (ch. 10, p. 64).

In a later "shewing", Jesus tells her that the pattern of seeking/finding, and of suffering/transfiguration, is to be seen in his own life and ministry: suffering always precedes the working of miracles, or of uplifting:

"It is known that I have worked miracles heretofore, many, most high, marvellous and worshipful and great. And as I have done, so I do now continually, and shall do in time to come." It is known that before miracles come sorrows and anguish and trouble. And the reason is that we might know our own feebleness and the mischief we fall into by sin, and to make us meek and to make us cry to God for help and grace. Great miracles come after this, of the high might and wisdom and goodness of God--as he sheweth his power and the joys of heaven in as much as may be in this passing life, for the strengthening of our faith and increase of hope, in charity. Wherefore it pleaseth him to be known and worshipped in his miracles. His meaning then is that he willeth that we be not too overborne by the sorrows and tempestings that befall us. For it hath ever been so before the coming of miracles. (ch. 36, p. 106).

The greatest miracle of all is, of course, the resurrection, in which we are made whole and like the risen Lord. Until that time, the Christian must see the Lord from the perspective of the cross. Yet he can be at peace, knowing the Love of God, and anticipating the resurrection into a life which is without pain, in the full presence of God. In this life, the experience of communion with God--in the "touchings" of the Spirit, in prayer, and even in the

context of pain--gives us joy, and makes us long for the bliss which is to come. Understanding the transformation which is taking place in us by the Spirit, we may not only give thanks in spite of pain, and our "fallings" into sin; but we may give thanks for everything that happens, knowing that nothing happens apart from the Love of God which cares for us:

...when we fall again to ourselves, by heaviness and ghostly blindness and feeling of pains ghostly and bodily, by reason of our frailty, it is God's will that we know that he hath not forgotten us. And so meaneth he in these words, and saith for comfort: "And thou shalt never more have pain in any manner: nor any manner of sickness, nor any manner of disliking, nor wanting of will; but ever joy and bliss. Why should it then grieve thee to suffer a while, since it is my will and to my worship?" It is God's will that we take his promises and his comforting as fully and as mightily as we may. And also it is his will that we take our abidings and our distress as lightly as we may, and set them at naught. For the more lightly that we take them, and the less price that we set on them, for love, the less pain shall we have in feeling of them, and the more thanks and meed shall we have for them. (ch. 64, p. 173).

In a characteristically simple and concise passage in the Shorter Version of the Revelations, Julian summarises her understanding of the Christian response to pain: that in all that happens, we are meant to learn love, and to be at peace. If we love God, then all things that happen, happen for our good:

Does everything on earth divide us? I answer and say: 'In that it serves us, it is good, and in that it shall perish it is wretchedness; and in that man sets his heart upon it otherwise than in this way, it is sin.' And for the time that a man or woman loves sin (if there be any such), he is in pain that surpasses all pains. When he loves not sin but hates it and loves God, all is well; and he that truly does this though he sin sometimes through frailty and ignorance, yet in his will he falls not because he wills mightily to rise again and behold God whom he loves in all his will. God has made them (i.e., such men and women) to be loved by him or her that has been a sinner, but ever He loves and ever He longs to have our love. And when we mightily and wisely love Jesus, we are in peace. (ch. XXIII, S G L., p. 72)

Julian's experience of compassion is to share in the pain which Christ has, in order to share in his glory; and this experience is, in turn, shared by all souls-to-be-saved. She sees, in the above passage, that even men and women who

love sin were created not to love sin, but to love God. Here she begins to experience compassion for her fellow-men, feeling in herself the pains of those individuals who suffer from sin. She graphically portrays this compassionate pain, which is common to the Church, in the Thirteenth Revelation, where compassion is referred to in terms of Jesus' bodily pains on the cross. She recalls the vision which she had earlier, in which Christ's flesh seemed to be dried like a cloth in a bitter wind:

For in that time that our Saviour died upon the Rood, there was a sharp dry wind--I saw it--dreadfully cold. And when all the precious blood that could flow from his blessed body was bled out, there yet remained a moisture in the sweet flesh of Christ. But the loss of blood and the pain within, and the blowing of the wind and the cold from without, met together in the sweet body of Christ; these four dried up the flesh of Christ as time went on. The pain, sharp and bitter as it was, was yet long-lasting--I saw it. And the pain dried up all the lively quality of Christ's flesh. (ch. 16, p. 74).

Now she sees the participation of the Church in the same "drying", in which the Church experiences the bitter cold "wind" of sin, and is shaken by it; nevertheless the Church, like Christ, shall be raised up to life:

Thus I saw how Christ hath compassion on us because of sin. And just as I was before, in the passion of Christ, filled full of pain and compassion, so in this I was, in part, filled with compassion for all my even-christians. (For full well he loveth the people that shall be saved--that is to say, God's servants.) Holy Church shall be shaken with sorrow and anguish and tribulation in this world, as men shake a cloth in the wind. But to this our Lord answered in this manner: "A great thing I shall make of this in heaven--a thing of endless worship and of everlasting joy"...(ch. 28, p. 92).

The nature of compassion--of com-passion--is therefore that we share in crucifixion and in resurrection, neither without the other; for

He said not "Thou shalt not be troubled, thou shalt not be travailed, thou shalt not be distressed"; but he said "Thou shalt not be overcome". (ch. 68, p. 181).

CHAPTER FOUR: THE GIFT OF CHARITY
(TRUE LONGING FOR GOD)

The Relation Between Charity and Faith

In her analysis of prayer and of the Christian response to pain, Julian describes the spiritual "wounds" of contrition and compassion: contrition, which is brought about by seeing the goodness of God towards us, especially in the prayer of "beholding"; and compassion, which is sharing in the pains of the crucified Lord. All the "wounds" of the Spirit are present to some degree, however, in every facet of our response to God's love: in prayer there is an element of compassion (for example, in "beholding" the crucified Lord); and in prayer there is longing for God, the "kind yearning" of the soul. Similarly, for Julian, the Christian experience of compassionate pain is intimately tied to prayer and the experience of contrition; and it, too, involves deep longing for God. The third "wound" of the Spirit finds its fullest expression, however, is the gift of charity, or love. This is the expression of divine Love in the soul-to-be-saved, incorporating prayer and the experience of compassion, so that the Christian begins to love with the Charity which he sees in God. It is therefore a deep longing for God, not only for our own "oneing", but for others--a reflection of the longing which God has, for us to be one with him.

In one sense the gift of charity has been Julian's subject all along, insofar as charity is always mediated through the "wounds" of contrition and compassion. In the prayer of "beholding" the soul is conformed to Christ, as in the experience of compassion. We are, therefore, conformed to the life of love. At the same time, we have been concerned, so far, primarily with the relationship of the individual soul to the Lord: bringing his needs to God,

beholding God in silent prayer, praising God, and experiencing contrition in the light of God's Love; and feeling, in himself, the suffering of Christ, anticipating the joy of the resurrection. The final "wound" of the Spirit deepens these experiences, by turning them outward: to feel contrition for all men, thereby sharing in their prayer; to feel compassion for all men, in their experience of dread; and to long for all men to be at-one with God. Within this relationship of charity towards all men, we shall see a special relationship of love which is found only in the Church: the bond of intimate love which unites the Bride to Christ, and in which compassion gives way to joy, in knowing those who share in the joy of Christ.

Julian does not separate the experience of deep longing, or charity, from the experience of faith. Faith is to be understood in the context of the gift of charity, because faith is brought about by love. It is a love-relationship of trusting, of obeying (as children obey their Mother), and of being faithful. This relationship is established by God's Love itself: we trust because we are loved, and are sure of that love. Charity, on the other hand, will be seen as a relationship of faith. God is faithful to us; and in response we are able to love, because in faith we know the Beloved, (the "Maker, Keeper, and Lover").

Earlier, we said that for Julian the prayer of "beholding", which brings about conformation to Jesus, typifies faith. To deliberately look away from Christ is to lose faith, because it is to see only our own shortcomings, without seeing any remedy for them; or it is to fall into fear (of death or of punishment) for which there is no solution. In what follows we shall explore this concept further, as it bears on the gift of Charity: that love becomes possible when we know that we are loved, which love Julian sees in Christ. Underlying her understanding of the gift of Charity is an awareness that there is no love

apart from "beholding", or faith. If we cannot see God's love, so that we trust him, there is really no sense in which we can say that we "love" him.

One concept which develops through the Revelations, in Julian's discussion of God's love for us and our response to him, is that true love is impossible when one is under the burden of guilt. Conversely, "homely" love makes the response of love possible:

The highest wisdom is for a creature to do according to the will and counsel of his highest sovereign Friend. This blessed Friend is Jesus; and it is his will and counsel that we hold us with him and fasten us, homely, to him evermore--in what state so ever we be. For whether we be foul or clean, we are ever one in his loving. (ch. 76, p. 194).

In her visions, Julian is enabled to speak of God, the incarnate Son, as her "best [sovereign] friend". The nature of faithful love is unselfconscious intimacy, in which guilt does not need to be mentioned, and in which the emphasis falls entirely upon the self-giving love of the Saviour.

One might object at this point that her grasp of the Christian relationship to God is far too child-like and simple, particularly because no mention has been made of guilt, or of human responsibility for sin. If it is true that God loves us "homely", like a Mother who nurses her child, then in what sense are we responsible for our own behaviour? Are we guilty of anything when we sin? And if so, what is the nature of our guilt? It has been argued that Julian, in her insistence upon the Love of God, ignores the whole problem of guilt and blame, and of human responsibility for sin, in the Revelations.⁵⁷ A careful

57 Clifton Wolters refers to Julian's "heresy" partly in this regard (op. cit., p. 36). Thornton (op. cit., p. 211 ff.) skirts the issue, referring simply to Julian's "optimism"; following Inge (Inge, William Ralph, Studies of English Mystics, John Murray, Long, 1906, pp. 63 ff.).

All of these refer to Julian's statement that there is no wrath in God, which Julian adduced from the fact that she did not experience

reading of the Revelations will show, however, that she does consider the questions of guilt, blame and human responsibility in some detail. It may even be argued that these form the central theme of the Revelations, since she does not see the possibility of charity apart from an answer to guilt and blame, and in the context of human responsibility before God.

A consistent theme in the Revelations is the nature of charity as a gift. Love, for Julian, cannot be coerced; there would be no true love if the lover were afraid of the Beloved. Thus she argues that fear of God (in the sense of "doubtful dread") is the opposite of love, even if it takes the guise of piety and faith. Rather, love is given freely, and is compelling by its own nature. In the situation of guilt, which is anxiety (a form of sin) love is rendered unnatural, and ultimately impossible. For there to be a human response of love, human guilt for sin must somehow be resolved. Julian sees that, in fact, there is no blame in God, although God is righteous and we are sinful--and actually because of God's righteousness (which is his Love), and our sin, which is our dis-ease.

A persistent question which Julian poses at the time of her visions is why she has been unable to see blame in God. She is surprised that during the course of her visions she is never held accountable for sin, and never sees divine judgement (in the sense of condemnation) at all. This prompts her to ask whether she has understood the teachings of the Church properly, regarding guilt, and particularly the doctrines of eternal damnation and purgatorial pains.

blame in her Revelations. It will be seen that a large part of the Revelations is in fact concerned with precisely the problems of guilt and human responsibility for sin, because of Julian's inability to understand her visions on this point. (contra Walsh, p. 39).

Is it possible that human beings are not accountable for sin, and will not be punished? (ch. 11, 27, and 50). The answer that she receives is that the understanding of the Church regarding human responsibility for sin is true; nevertheless, there is a "higher" judgement, to be seen in Jesus' compassion for sinners, which we cannot presently understand, but which will be made clear at the time of Judgement.

The eschatological theme in Julian's theology is important, and is most dramatic here.⁵⁸ On two occasions especially, she is given answers to her questions in eschatological terms. The first (described in ch. 29-36) concerns an ontological solution to sin and guilt: She learns that there will be two "great

58 The only writer to treat Julian's eschatological emphasis with its due attention is Thomas Merton. In a meditation on the Revelations, he writes:

I pray much to have a wise heart, and perhaps the rediscovery of Lady Julian of Norwich will help me...She is a true theologian with greater clarity, depth, and order than St. Theresa: she really elaborates, theologically, the content of her revelations...

One of her most telling and central convictions is her orientation to what one might call an eschatological secret, the hidden dynamism which is at work already and by which "all manner of thing shall be well." This "secret," this act which the Lord keeps hidden, is really the full fruit of the Parousia. It is not just that "He comes," but He comes with this secret to reveal, He comes with this final answer to all the world's anguish, this answer which is already decided, but which we cannot discover (and which, since we think we have reasoned it all out anyway) we have stopped trying to discover. Actually, her life was lived in the belief in this "secret," the "great deed" that the Lord will do on the Last Day, not a deed of destruction and revenge, but of mercy and of life, all partial expectations will explode and everything will be made right. It is the great deed of "the end," which is still secret, but already fully at work in the world, in spite of all its sorrow, the great deed "ordained by Our Lord from without beginning." (Merton, Thomas, Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander, Burns and Oates, London, 1966, p. 191-192).

deeds" which will finally account for sin, and effect its healing in some sense. The first of these "deeds" for her to see is one which is to take place on the Day of Judgement. The other one is seen to begin in this life--possibly indicating the crucifixion/resurrection, and the establishment of the Church on earth, although Julian does not say so explicitly. In any case, the two "great deeds" are the means by which "charity given" becomes a reality for us who are in sin, both now and in the time of judgement.

Her second answer concerning the problems of guilt and punishment follows immediately (the Fourteenth Revelation), and concerns God's judgement of sin. This "shewing" represents the attitude (or judgement) which reflects the reality of reconciliation, in the "great deeds". In light of the "deeds" which God does and shall do, God's judgement is seen to be one of compassion for sinners, though it involves hatred for sin itself. Here she sees two kinds of "judgement": that of the Church, which is provisionally given for this life; and an eschatological judgement which goes beyond our capacity to understand at present, but which can be seen in the expression of "pity and ruth" which Julian sees on Jesus' face, in her prayer of "beholding". The clearest view of this aspect of "charity given" in the Revelations is, once more the central vision of the "Lord and servant", in the Fourteenth Revelation (ch. 51). Here she sees in parable the two "great deeds" and the corresponding "judgement" at the same time. At the time of her vision, however, she is unable to draw the connection between her two "shewings", and in the Revelations as a whole we are left to draw it largely for ourselves. Nevertheless the vision clearly depicts both the reality of sin and human accountability; and the fact of divine grace, or Charity, in the face of sin.

Following this vision, she discusses the nature of faith in relation to reason, to say that the highest use of our reasoning faculty is in faith. Our capacity to understand is provided so that we might understand the being of God, insofar as it is revealed to us, and our own nature in relationship to God. Reason is meant to be informed by charity, and guided by it, to find its proper expression. Finally, she sees the nature of the Church as the body of Love in which charity is given to the world: The Church is the one whom Christ loves intimately, his "bride". It is also the body which surrounds the individual, so that he does not fall to sin. In the final Revelation, in which Julian encounters the fiend and the power of evil, she learns that as an individual she is truly subject to evil and can "fall"; but that the body of the Church cannot fall, because it is jealously kept by God. She triumphs over evil by rehearsing the faith of the Church, and by turning to the cross in obedience to her curate. The Church, therefore, makes charity a real possibility for the individual, who is surrounded by her love.

Julian depicts the gift of Charity to, and in, the Church in tangible ways: in the sacraments, and in the works of the Church which we think of as "virtues". These do not occupy much space in the Revelations, possibly because she assumes that the reader is familiar with, and understands, the sacraments of the Church and their importance. At the same time, the nature of her theology as a whole is to depict the Christian life as sacramental in a larger sense, in that we receive Christ, and are indwelt by him, continually through the Spirit. In all the works of the Spirit, we are meant to be turned outward in love, seeing the world as God sees it, and loving it with his love.

The Problems of Guilt, Blame and Responsibility

The most important element of the gift of divine Love to man is the nature of human responsibility before God. Julian does not always articulate her concept of human responsibility in love, but it is readily seen in the Revelations as a whole. She is concerned with the capacity for human beings to reflect the Love of the Trinity, actually participating in God's Love. This would not be possible if we continually related to God only as children, always being loved but being unable to respond to that love in any mature way. If we mirror God's Love at all, we mirror his responsibility in Love. God is, of course, supremely "responsible" in his Love, as our Maker, Keeper and Lover. Divine Charity nourishes, cares for, heals, and gives even in the face of rejection and great illness, and even when the love-relationship is wholly one-way. This is the Love which we are meant to imitate, in the grace of God: the love which is not selfish, but self-less, and which cares wholly for the one who is loved.

The relationship of charity to human responsibility mirrors that between transfiguration and pain, which we have already seen. We said that transfiguration takes place through pain: compassion necessarily involves passion, and the miracle of transfiguration is to be seen in the contrast between pain and healing, the former state and the last. Similarly, Julian depicts charity as given precisely in the context of guilt, when charity would not otherwise be possible. God transfigures us by removing guilt, and in this we learn the true nature of love--the love which is responsible, even for those who are "contrary" to it and who resist it in wrath. In this sense, guilt provides the opportunity for faith, which is a true knowledge of God. We do not know him in a shallow way, but we know him having seen his Love in the midst of pain, particularly in the trial of the crucifixion.

At this point it will be helpful to address the question whether Julian develops a clear concept of guilt at all in the Revelations. It has been remarked that in the parable of the "Lord and servant", any doctrine of human responsibility for sin is denied. Julian expressly says, for example, that Adam falls into a ditch even though he wills to do God's will (ch. 51). On this reading, it would appear that she has forgotten about the question of human responsibility for sin altogether; or that she wants to maintain a kind of sinless state for Adam, or to say that he is not ultimately responsible for sin. If so, she would be arguing that humanity as a whole is guiltless before God, because she identifies Adam with all-men. This interpretation appears to be borne out by Julian's own choice of words: she never refers directly to "guilt" anywhere in the Revelations; and, as she remarks herself, she never depicts damnation or divine wrath, because she did not see them in her visions.⁵⁹ Certainly a concept of Christ as divine Judge, and ultimate human accountability for sin seems to be challenged by them. Julian, however, is first to point this out--protesting that she is herself surprised at the emphasis of her visions.

She relates how, as her visions unfolded, she actually felt that her faith was being undermined, even though she felt assurance and joy at what

59 This is remarkable, in view of contemporary works which are wholly devoted to the subject. These include The Chastising of God's Children; and Meditation on the Dread of Judgement, which is alluded to by Richard Rolle. Cf. Bazire, op. cit. See also Colledge, Medieval Mystics of England, op. cit., p. 23.

Langland depicts the forces of pestilence as fighting on the side of God in the apocalypse. Landland, op. cit., p. 313, n. 5, and Book XX.

she saw. She sees a vision incorporating the Trinity, even though she believes (evidently) that neither corporeal nor intellectual visions ought to be available to an ordinary person like herself (ch. 4). In the vision of the "hazelnut" it is quite clear that God is not angry with the world, because otherwise-- as Julian sees it--the world would disappear. (ch. 5). Pressing this point, she finds herself unable to see wrath in God at all (ch. 49). Instead, Jesus appears as a loving Mother, a Friend, her "Keeper and Lover"--but never as her judge. Finally, to her consternation she finds that she is unable even to see sin (ch. 11).

At the same time, it would appear that her own guilt was assumed by Julian before, during and after her visions. She claims that guilt is the one concept which she is not unwilling to abandon, when during the first "shewings" she feels that it is being omitted or challenged. Midway through the Revelations, between the Thirteenth and Fourteenth "shewings", she protests that she has been unable to discern in the visions the teachings of the Church as she understands them:

In this mortal life mercy and forgiveness is our way, that ever more leadeth us to grace. Through the tempest and the sorrow that we fall into, on our side, we be often dead--according to man's judgement on earth. But in the sight of God, the soul that shall be safe was never dead nor shall be. Yet in this I wondered and pondered with all the diligence of my soul, after this fashion: "Good Lord, I see thee-- that thou art very truth; and I know that we sin grievously all day, and are most blameworthy. I cannot evade the knowing of this truth, yet I see not thee shewing to us any manner of blame. How may this be?" (ch. 50, p. 131).

The theme is repeated elsewhere. We have already noted that for her it is her own sin which causes pain to the crucified Lord (ch. 27). She speaks of herself more than once as a "wretch" (cf. ch. 66), probably with genuine conviction rather than with false modesty. Her whole concept of sin as "contrariness" and as wrath presupposes responsibility of some kind. She says, that

we are "blameworthy" for our sin, and directly responsible ourselves for the crucifixion. She cries out in prayer:

"...I have made myself foul and unlike to thee; and I cannot or may not amend it but with thine help and grace." (ch. 61, p. 167).

And she points out, even more explicitly, our guilt:

In all this beholding, then, methought I must needs see and know that we are sinners and do many evil things that we ought to avoid; and leave many good deeds undone that we ought to perform. Wherefore we deserve pain and blame and wrath. (ch. 46, p. 124).

What is startling for Julian is the contrast between what she understands about her own guilt, and what she actually sees in her visions, in which her guilt is never pointed out:

Wherefore we deserve pain and blame and wrath. Yet notwithstanding all this, I saw truly that our Lord was never wroth nor shall he ever be. For he is God: he is Good: he is Truth: he is Love: he is Peace. His Might, his Wisdom, his Charity and his Unity suffer him not to be wroth. For I saw truly that it is against the property of his Wisdom, and against the property of his Goodness. God is the goodness which may not be wroth; for God is naught but Goodness. (ch. 46, p. 124).

Thus she sees that it will be difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile the teaching of the Church with the content of her visions so far. If her visions are correct, she reckons that there are only two possibilities: either sin itself has been done away with in some sense, so that reconciliation with God is possible; or else God views sin differently than we do, such that we sin but are nevertheless not blameworthy. However, to acknowledge either of these things would be to deny the faith of the Church; and Julian has seen in the visions themselves that she will continue to sin. But she remains convinced, both on the grounds of the faith of the Church and also in her own conscience, that we are both "sinners and blameworthy" (ch. 50). Rather than repudiating her visions outright, she turns again to Jesus to

ask for some further explanation of what she has seen. At this point, she still believes that unless she sees the truth about guilt and her own responsibility for sin, she cannot be saved:

"...I need to know, as it seemeth to me, if I am to go on living here, for the knowing of good and evil: how I may be reason and grace, part them asunder, and love goodness and hate evil, as Holy Church teacheth." So I cried, inwardly, with all my might, seeking unto God for help, on this fashion: "O Lord Jesus, King of bliss, how shall I find ease? Who shall tell me and teach me what it needeth me to know, if I cannot, at this time, see it in thee?" (ch. 50, p. 132).

In the visions which follow, beginning with the parable of the Lord and servant, she receives what she eventually regards as a solution to her dilemma. Ultimately she will conclude that there is no need to reject either the reality of our blame or guilt before God, even with its strongest implications (such as damnation for the reprobate); or the overwhelming message of Love which she sees repeatedly through her visions. The understanding of the Church is right, but is provisional, and is superseded by the judgement of Christ himself.⁶⁰

60 Julian says that the vision was shown "full mystily" (ch. 50). It is possible that she means this word in the sense of "allegorically". It has been argued that the same word appearing in a manuscript of Hilton's "Exposition of Psalm 90" is a mistake for "mystically":

There is, indeed, one apparently very modern word, in the extracts from *Qui Habitat*, which claims our attention: where the manuscripts collated by Björn Wallner read 'morali and mistili,' the editor has 'morally and mystically.' However, there is little doubt that the editor is using 'mystically,' not in the sense in which we use it today, a sense generally rendered in medieval English by 'contemplatively,' but in its older sense as a synonym of 'analogically.' Hilton is here speaking of the ascent of the mind to God through the various senses of Scripture--from the literal or historical meaning to the moral or tropological, and to the highest of all, the mystical or analogical. It is likely enough that the editor here restores for us Hilton's original meaning: that 'mistili' is a corruption of 'misticali.' (Of the Knowledge of Ourselves and of God, *op. cit.*, p. vi). See also Colledge, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-49 for the use of the word "mystical" in the writings of Hugh of St. Victor.

Before investigating Julian's parable, and the "shewings" which precede it, it will be helpful to draw a distinction between what Julian calls "blame" in the Revelations, and what we ordinarily think of today as "guilt". Julian's original question concerning human responsibility, prior to the Fourteenth Revelation, has to do with the fact that she has not seen "any manner of blame" (ch. 50). On the one hand, her words might be taken to refer to human culpability (where "blame" = "guilt"). In context, however, the word "blame" seems to refer rather to the act of blame, i.e., of blaming someone for guilt. Julian has not been confronted with her sin at any point in the Revelations, nor has she seen anyone else blamed for sin. This is to be distinguished from what we ordinarily think of as "guilt", in the sense of accountability for a crime, or of misconduct. Her concern is with the attitude which God has taken towards her in her visions, i.e., the fact that she has not been adjudged guilty of anything. This says nothing about whether she is in fact "guilty" for sin--a point which Julian understands herself, and elaborates in the chapters which follow.

Now we may return, for a moment, to Jesus' revelation to Julian earlier on (the Thirteenth Revelation) in which he tells her that she will continue to sin. Jesus says:

"Sin must needs be, but all shall be well. All shall be well; and all manner thing shall be well." (ch. 27, p. 91).

If sin is blameworthy (and given that sin results in pain generally), Julian finds herself unable to accept that "all shall be well":

But meanwhile I still remained, as I beheld, in sorrow and mourning, saying thus to our Lord--but meaning it with very great dread: "Ah, good Lord, but how can all be well in face of the great harm that is come by sin to creatures?" (ch. 29, p. 94).

The answer she receives is that the greatest harm ever done through sin occurred in the fall of Adam. Here, all mankind--not just Adam himself--suffers from the sin of one man, as Julian understood the fall. Nevertheless, this sin is seen to be overcome in the passion of Christ. Therefore she should be content to know that any other harm that might come about through sin--logically including the problem of her own punishment or "doom"--can be "made well".

As this vision unfolds, Julian is taught that she should not worry about the future with regard to sin and judgement, but should leave the problem wholly in God's hands:

Thus our good Lord answered all the questions and doubts that I could bring up, saying for full comfort: "I may make all things well; and I can make all things well: and I shall make all things well: and I will make all things well: and thou shalt see thyself that all manner of things shall be well." (ch. 31, p. 96)

The immediate point of this Revelation, which refers to the Being of the whole Trinity, is that the human assessment of sin and its remedy is inadequate. Although sin is harmful, God is perfectly well aware of the problem, and can cope with it:

In these two sayings the soul received various manners of understanding. One was this: he willeth we know that he taketh heed not only of noble things and great, but also of little and small, low and simple--of both the one and the other. This is his meaning when he saith "all manner thing shall be well"; for he willeth we know that the least thing shall not be forgotten. Another understanding was this: there are many evil deeds done in our sight, and such great harm taken that it seemeth to us impossible that things should ever come to a good end. As we look upon these, we sorrow and mourn for them...The cause is that in the use of our reason we are now so blind, so lowly and so simple that we cannot know the high marvellous wisdom, the power and the goodness of the blissful Trinity. (ch. 32, p. 98).

Immediately, she is shown the first of the two "great deeds" to be performed by the Trinity, which will render "all things well".

Two Great Deeds: The Eschatological Solution to Sin and Blame

The Thirteenth Revelation is a great comfort to Julian, because of the vision of the "deeds" which the Trinity will do (and is doing) to overcome the problems of guilt and sin. She tells us what she understood in Jesus' promise to "make all things well":

So in the same five words beforesaid, "I may make all things well", I understand a mighty comfort in all the works of our Lord God that are to come. There is a deed which the blissful Trinity shall do in the last day (if I see aright); but what that deed shall be, and how it shall be done, is unknown to all creatures which are beneath Christ, and shall be so until the time when it shall be done. The goodness and the love of our Lord God will us to know that it shall be done. But his might and wisdom by the same love will to hide and conceal from us what it shall be, and how it shall be done. The reason why he willeth us to know it just so, is because he willeth us to be easier in our souls and peaceable in loving, leaving aside the beholding of all troubles that could hinder our having true joy in him. (ch. 32, p. 98-99).

Significantly, she does not say that the "great deed" to be performed at the time of Judgement will be a pardoning of all sinners. First, we should bear in mind that so far her concern has been with the harm which evil has caused to humanity, rather than with the question of punishment specifically. Second, she sees the category of this deed to be beyond our frame of reference: it is neither pardon, nor reconciliation, nor anything that we might call it, because we have no way to understand its nature. Julian is careful not to classify the "deed" in any ordinary terms, except to assert that it will make all things well--referring in some sense to the being of things, rather than simply to God's view (or our own view) of them.

At this point she first explicitly raises the question of punishment for sin. Early in the Revelations she states her determination to hold to the faith of the Church as she understands it:

Yet in all things I believe as Holy Church preacheth and teacheth. For the faith of Holy Church of which I had understanding before--and which, I hope by the grace of God, I willfully keep in use and in custom, stood continually in my sight. It was my will and meaning never to accept anything that could be contrary thereto. With this intent and with this meaning I beheld the shewing with all my diligence. For in this I beheld it Julian's visions, and the teaching of the Church⁷ as one in God's meaning. (ch. 9, p. 61).

Therefore she asserts that the teachings of the Church concerning punishment (in eternal damnation) must be true:

One point of our faith is that many creatures shall be damned--for instance the angels who fell from heaven because of their pride, and are now fiends; and man on earth that dieth out of the faith of Holy Church, that is to say, those who are heathens; and also man that hath received christening but liveth an unchristian life and so dyeth out of charity--all these shall be damned to hell without end, as Holy Church teacheth me to believe. In view of all this it seemed to me impossible that all manner of things should be well according as our Lord shewed in this time. (ch. 32, p. 99).

It should be noted that while she claims to hold to the faith of the Church, she boldly acknowledges the fact that the faith (as she understands it) and her visions are so far apparently incompatible. The answer which she receives to her further questions is simple, and once more refers to the apophatic nature of the Trinity:

...I had no other answer to the difficulty in this shewing of our Lord's except this: "What is impossible to thee is not impossible to me; I shall save my word in all things--I shall make all things well." (ch. 32, p. 99).

She does not take this statement to solve her problem satisfactorily. She responds, somewhat coyly, by asking to see hell and purgatory for herself--not, of course, to see whether they really exist:

...it was not my meaning to put to the proof anything that belongeth to our faith. (For I believed firmly and truly that hell and purgatory have the same purpose that Holy Church teacheth them to have.) Rather my meaning was that I might have seen, for my instruction...how I might live the more perfectly unto God's worship and my soul's progress. (ch. 33, p. 100).

One may doubt whether she is entirely honest here, since it is not clear how a vision of hell would really render her more perfect in living. In any case, her request is not granted. She is urged simply to trust what she has heard, that there shall be a great deed that will solve the problem of human pain due to evil. Rather than seeing the state of the damned, then, she is continually shown the state of those who are saved--and instructed to turn her attention towards the Saviour, rather than the plight of those whom she thinks to be lost in his sight.

Next, a second "great deed" is described to her (ch. 36), which deed differs in that it is begun in this life (rather than at dooms-day). Once again, she is vague about what kind of "deed" it is, and simply asserts that it was kept secret from her. The purpose of this "shewing", on the other hand, is clear. She is to turn from worrying about the damned, not only with regard to after-life, but with regard to this life as well:

...whenever in our folly we turn to behold the reprov'd, tenderly our Lord toucheth us and blissfully claspeth, saying in our soul: "Let be, my love, my most dear child, and attend to me (for I am enough to thee), and take joy in thy Saviour and thy salvation."
 ...What our good Lord willeth to do concerning his poor creatures is now unknown to me. But this deed and the afore-mentioned deed are not both the same, but two different ones. This one shall be known sooner; that is, as soon as we each come to heaven; and also it can be known here, in part, by those to whom our Lord giveth it. But the great deed afore-mentioned shall be known neither in heaven nor in earth until it be done. (ch. 36, p. 106).

As they stand, the two "great deeds" do little to solve Julian's dilemma with regard to guilt and blame, and the nature of human responsibility for sin. She is comforted by what she sees, but she is not satisfied that her questions have been fully answered. She persists in her questions concerning the nature of judgement and the teachings of the Church. We should bear in mind, however, that she may be referring to herself when she speaks of

"those to whom the Lord giveth it" to know the secret of the great deed which has begun in this life. She is writing after twenty years of contemplative prayer. Perhaps, as is often the case with visionaries, she finds herself unable to describe fully what she saw in the two great "deeds". The best she can do is to explain their purpose, in an ontological reconciliation of all things to God.

The well-known phrase, to "make all things well", is never defined by Julian in the chapters which describe this Revelation. It is worth making this point again, because of the tendency to read into the Revelations the concept of a universal salvation. She never says that this is what she saw in her visions. She does tell us that, contrary to her expectation, she did not see the Jews singled out as guilty for the crucifixion, any more than anyone else (ch. 33). Her point in context, however, is to draw an equality between all sinners (like the fallen angels, who are fiends) who are "accursed and damned without end". She exempts "those that were converted by grace", but she does not indicate here whether she means Jews who were subsequently baptized, or those who might have been saved through some other means. She is careful, too, to refer only to those Jews "who did Jesus to death"--and not to Jews in general, any more than she refers to any body of peoples who are lost. In her one reference to "heathens", it is significant that Julian includes baptized Christians who do not live chaste lives (ch. 33).⁶¹

61. It is difficult to tell whether Julian followed the belief, seen in Hilton and others, that salvation is impossible outside of baptism, but not guaranteed by baptism. Certainly she argues that baptism in itself means nothing if the individual is out of charity, i.e., not faithful to Christ. See Ch. 32 and 33 of the Revelations, especially the following:

By this sight I understood that of all creatures who are of the Devil's sort in this life and thus make their ending,

If we understand Julian's two "great deeds" to represent some kind of universal pardon, it is clear that her visions are irreconcilable with the doctrine of the Church. Possibly this is in the mind of the scribe who writes, at the close of the Revelations, that we must take "all things together", and not select parts of her theology which might, in isolation, give the impression of heresy. She may herself have realized that what she saw was incompatible with Catholic faith, hence her protestations to the contrary. Or, the "deeds" might be seen in themselves as an attempt, albeit subconscious, to avoid the elements of the faith which Julian finds distasteful, e.g., the concept of damnation or of human guilt. On the grounds of the text itself, however--and also in light of Julian's theology as a whole--it does not seem likely that these thoughts fairly represent her own.

First, it seems logical that if Julian's two "great deeds" actually answered her problems in accepting the concept of human guilt and damnation (assuming that she had problems with these concepts before the time of her visions), there would have been little point in her persistent requests to have satisfactory answers. Her problem is with the visions themselves, which do not contain a vision of hell (for example)--not with the concept of hell itself. If she were merely using a literary device in her description of her questions regarding judgement and guilt, it seems logical that she would have asked her questions the other way around: for example, she would have asked to see the pardon of those souls whom she thought to be "damned". But in fact,

there is no more mention made of them before God and his holy ones than there is of the Devil--notwithstanding that they are of man's kind, or whether they are christened or not. (ch. 33, p. 100).

she asks to see hell and purgatory, protesting that she had not seen them and ought to have.

Second, if she is attempting in the Revelations to attack the whole concept of guilt and punishment--using the subtle device of visions/questions/more visions, or even subconsciously, in having the visions--there is no point in having two "great deeds". One "deed" would do nicely, particularly in view of the fact that the "deeds" are never described, and remain fully mysterious.

Third, the fact that one of the "deeds" is reserved for the Day of Judgement, and the other begins in this life, is not the logical point for Julian to have made, if her concern really were with punishment or guilt alone. The emphasis would have lain on the eschaton itself--the time of Judgement--because that is the moment that really "counts", where eternal punishment is concerned. In fact, however, her vision addresses the question of our relationship to God both now and in after-life, especially with regard to the pain which is suffered from sin; and with regard to our own anxiety, about the nature of divine Judgement. The answer which she receives is that God, the Trinity, is our "Keeper" both now and eternally. The fact that God does not make things "well" according to our own expectations--certainly not in any way which Julian can see--refers to the relationship which we always have with God: knowing him as he reveals himself to us (economically), and not knowing him in his own Being, which Being we cannot comprehend. (ch. 34).

Two Kinds of Judgement (The Parable of the "Lord and Servant")

We have seen that the effect of the Thirteenth Revelation is not, as is often supposed, to relieve Julian's anxiety about the damned, or her own guilt before God, but to relieve her anxiety about the visions that she has had so far. She protests that she has not seen blame--the eternal Judgement which

she has always expected to see. Her answer is that she has not seen blame because the visions have been from Jesus' point of view, in light of what he has done: He has already made "all things well". But Julian remains confused: If things are already made well, what has happened to the "fall" of man? Where is Adam's guilt--or her own?

The Fourteenth Revelation responds to her further questions with a parable, in which she sees the way in which God does, in fact, judge mankind--or more particularly, the souls-to-be-saved (since she never sees any other souls in her visions). In this "shewing" she learns that, just as the ontological solution to the problem of guilt before God is beyond our knowing, so the judgement of God is beyond our ability to understand, except as we can see it in Christ. In the parable of the "Lord and servant" she will see the two great "deeds" enacted before her, and the nature of divine Judgement which follows on the deeds. This is what she takes to be a "higher" judgement, as opposed to the Judgement which she has expected to see, in the final "doom" of sinners. In this sense, the two Judgements which Julian sees--that of the Church, and that which is in Christ, in the parable--correspond to the two "great deeds" which she has seen in the vision before.

The content of the vision of the Lord and servant is not entirely new in the Revelations, although it is the only vision which takes the form of a parable. The first clue to its meaning is much earlier, when Julian sees the transfiguration of Christ. We recall that the change in his countenance effects a change in her own countenance, to fill her with joy (ch. 21). Prior to her vision of the transfiguration, she tells us that her vision of the crucifixion gave her great pain. A large part of her pain is evidently her conviction of her own guilt, for having brought the crucifixion about. In the

transfiguration, she sees Jesus look at her in joy; and she is greatly relieved, thinking perhaps that it would have been unbearable to see Jesus die. This effects a change in her judgement of herself, from condemning herself, as it were, to enjoying the Love of her saviour.

Still earlier Julian observes that our own judgement is not like God's, not only with regard to guilt and sin, but in all things:

For man beholdeth some deeds as well done, and some deeds as evil; but our Lord beholdeth them not so. For as all that hath being, in Kind, is of God's making, so everything that is done is so in virtue of God's doing. It is easy to understand that the best deed is well done; and just so well done as is the best deed and the highest, even so well done is the least deed; and all according to his attributes, and in order that our Lord hath ordained it to, from without-beginning: for there is no doer but he. (ch. 11, p. 67).

In her parable Julian is shown the truly "evil" deed--the fall of Adam--from God's own point of view, sharing in his "beholding". In this parable the transfiguration is repeated, once more showing her own transfiguration in Christ. The purpose of all this will be to allow her to "judge" with God's judgement:

All his judgements are easy and sweet, and they bring to great ease the soul that is turned from beholding of the blind judgement of man into the fair sweet judgement of our Lord God. (ch. 11, p. 67).

The conclusion which must follow from this is that human accountability for sin can only be reckoned by God. We see that we are sinful, and our "judgement" consequently is to condemn. God's own judgement is different, in light of the Being of God, who has "oned" us to himself in Christ. In seeing the Judgement of God, Julian is made more aware of her own guilt, and at the same time more aware of God's Lover. The two together leave her open to the gift of charity, through the "wounds" of the Spirit:

Most precious our good Lord keepeth us when it seemeth to us that we are well nigh forsaken and cast away for our sins. And because

we see that we have deserved it, and because of the meekness that we get thereby, we are raised in God's sight, by his grace. Then also, when our Lord will, he visiteth us with his special grace, with such contrition and also with compassion and true longing to God that we are at once delivered of sins and pain, and lifted up to bliss, equal with the saints. By contrition we are made clean, by compassion we are made ready, by true longing for God we are made worthy. These are the three means, so I understand, whereby all souls come to heaven (that is to say, those that have been sinners and shall be saved). (ch. 39, p. 120).

In the chapters which immediately precede the visual parable, Jesus teaches Julian about the difference between his judgement of her, in his Love, and her judgement of herself. She makes the difference clear several times:

This is the sovereign friendship of our courteous Lord, that he keepeth us so tenderly whilst we are in our sins. And furthermore he toucheth us secretly and sheweth us our sins, by the sweet light of mercy and grace. But when we see ourselves so foul, then we think that God must be wroth with us for our sins; thus we are moved by the Holy Ghost, by his contrition, to pray and desire the amending of ourselves with all our might, so as to slake the wrath of God, until we find rest in soul and quiet of conscience. Then we hope that God hath forgiven us our sins. And truly he hath. (ch. 40, p. 111)

Sometimes the above passage has been taken to mean that in Julian's thought, prayer really does "slake the wrath of God", because of our contrition.⁶²

From what we have already seen, however, it should be clear that Julian is referring to what we think, rather than what is true of God. We think that God must be "wroth" with us for our sins; the Holy Ghost, by his contrition, moves us to pray until we find rest of our consciences. The work of the Spirit is to replace our own judgement of ourselves with God's judgement. In Christ, we do not encounter a Judge who graciously accepts our contrition, and magnanimously "forgives" us. Instead, we discover that he has always been with us, in "homely" love:

62 Cf. Molinari, op. cit., pp. 78 ff.

Then our courteous Lord sheweth himself to the soul cheerfully, with glad countenance, with a friendly welcome, as though the soul had been in pain and in prison, and speaketh so:

My dear darling, I am glad thou art come to me; in all thy woe I have ever been with thee. And now thou seest me in my love, and we are oned in bliss.

Thus are sins forgiven by grace and mercy, and our soul worshipfully received in joy...(ch. 40, p. 111-112).

Julian reiterates her observations from the Third Revelation (ch. 11), in which she saw that God's judgement is consistent, while ours is not. This means that "judgement" as we understand it is essentially different from the judgement which is in Christ, in the way that our nature as creatures is different from God's own Being:

God judgeth us upon our kind substance, which is ever kept whole and safe, one in him; and this judgement is of his righteousness, Man judgeth us upon our changeable sensuality, which seemeth, now one thing, now another, according as it is dominated by the parts, and sheweth outwards. Thus this judgement is variable: sometimes it is good and light, sometimes hard and heavy. But in as much as it is hard and heavy, our good Lord Jesus reformeth it by mercy and grace through the power of his blessed passion; and so he bringeth it into his righteousness. And though these two be thus accorded and oned, they shall be known separately in heaven, without end. (ch. 45, p. 122)

The "parts" to which she refers are our "kind substance", which is Christ dwelling in us--reflected when we behave well; and the sin which is in us, reflected in our wrath. These are the only means by which man has to judge. But God judges as he sees us, which "beholding", as we have seen, is always to see us "oned" to him. This will be the substance of the Fourteenth Revelation, in which mankind (in Christ) is seen by God to be the Son. We note meantime that if it is true that our concept of judgement is essentially different from God's, then our concept of forgiveness, too, does not apply to the work of God:

God is the goodness which may not be wroth; for God is naught but Goodness. Our soul is oned to him, the unchangeable Goodness; and between God and our soul is neither wrath nor forgiveness, in his sight. (ch. 46, pp. 124-125).

Julian repeats herself in ch. 49: "Our Lord may not forgive" because he is not "wroth." Once more, it is important to see that for Julian there is not a removal of wrath in God, because it never was; nor is there a wiping away of blame--because we were never "blamed". Therefore when she refers to "blame", it always refers to our own expectations of blame, rather than what is in God. To see God's judgement is to realize that our expectations do not account for the extent of God's Love:

The beholding of this [God's judgement of our sin] will save us from complaint and despair in feeling our pains. And though we see truly that our sins deserve them, yet his love excuseth us. Of his great courtesy he doeth away with all our blame, and beholdeth us with ruth and pity, as children innocent and loveable. (ch. 28, p. 93).

It will now be clear that the two "judgements" which Julian sees are that of the Church, and God's own. The "judgement" of the Church is that sin is punishable, that we are guilty, that Christ is our eternal Judge. Whether Julian fairly represents the Church on this point may be argued, but this is her apprehension of the Church's teaching, and probably fairly represents the faith of her "even-christians", in any case. What is more important, however, is her reference to our judgement of sin, even in light of Christ. It is impossible for us to see sin as necessary in any sense (Julian's word is "behov-able"--i.e., "for our own good"), and it is logically impossible for us to understand sin except as blameworthy and harmful. She sees that this judgement, too, is true: man is worthy of blame, and sin is harmful. With reference to our own personal guilt, it is also true that we must experience contrition and the desire for forgiveness. In our own apprehension, it is also true that we are "forgiven". But none of these categories of thought ultimately applies to God's judgement of our guilt, or of our responsibility before him.

The divine judgement" which Julian understands in her visions is measured only by God's own Being. It is a "higher" judgement, not in the sense that it proves the Church to be wrong, but in its eschatological sense. We cannot understand divine Judgement in this life, but we can understand that of the Church. It is given for our own good, so that we might avoid sin. The two "judgements" appear in contrast, but both are "true":

The first doom, which cometh of God's righteousness--that is, of his high endless life--is that fair sweet doom which was shewn throughout the fair Revelation, in which I saw him assign to us no kind of blame. And yet, though this was sweet and delightful in the beholding of it, I could not fully rest at ease, because of the judgement of Holy Church--as I had first understood it, and which was continually before my mind. For according to this judgement, methought I needs must acknowledge myself a sinner; and, by the same judgement, I understood that sinners are sometimes worthy of blame and wrath. But these two I could not see in God; and therefore my attention and desire were more than I can or may tell. For the higher judgement God himself shewed in this same time: hence I needs must accept it: whilst the lower judgement was taught me before this, in Holy Church: so that I might not, by any means, leave go the lower judgement. (ch. 45, p. 122).

Julian is unable to rid herself of the idea that because of our sin, we must pay some sort of debt to God. Just prior to her vision of the Lord and servant, she solves her problem with a unique proposal: the "debt" which we owe to God is like that which children owe to their mother. God demands of us that we pay attention to what he says, and that we love him happily:

On two counts our soul must pay a debt; one is that we reverently marvel; the other is that we meekly endure, ever rejoicing in God. For he willeth us to know that in a short time we shall see clearly in him all that we desire. (ch. 47, p. 125).

In anticipation of the Fourteenth "shewing", she is keen to see how both kinds of "judgement" can be legitimate; and in the shewing she does indeed "reverently marvel".

We have already discussed various aspects of the vision of the "Lord and servant", in which she sees a servant in peasant's attire standing before a

great Lord seated on a throne.⁶³ Near the servant is a great chasm; and when the servant runs to fulfill the wishes of the Lord, he falls into the chasm and is severely crippled. She immediately understood the chasm to stand for sin, and in her first apprehension of the parable, she took the servant himself to be Adam. This vision, then, is of the "fall" of Adam into sin. The Lord, who had the face of Jesus which she had seen before, was clearly Jesus come to judge mankind for his sin. She understood her vision, then, to be of the eschaton; and she expected to see Adam's blame, in his removal from the garden of Eden, and the subsequent punishment for his sins.

Julian looks carefully for the moment of the final Judgement, but to her surprise, it does not come about. She is perplexed by several elements of the vision so far: The servant runs to serve the Lord, and falls into the ditch because he does not look where he is going, in his eagerness to serve. He cannot rise from the ditch subsequently, because of his own weakness. And his will, in running and falling, is not seen to be evil: Adam does not appear to be disobedient. On the other hand, it is still true that Adam has failed to carry out the Lord's will, by falling into the ditch. In this situation the Lord looks upon him in "pity and ruth", which Julian sees as his constant expression (his "outer regard"). She sees, more deeply, that the Lord is

63 The servant's ragged tunic is taken to stand for the humanity of Christ. The metaphor is not unique: the mysterious "monk of Farne" includes the following in his "meditation addressed to Christ crucified", ch. 4 (c. 1363-1371):

[addressing Christ] Thy mother made for thee a long tunic when thou didst take flesh from the Virgin. For thy tunic is thy humanity, which thy bretheren the Jews crucified, hanging it upon the wood of the cross, that thy Father might see whether it were the tunic of his Son or not...(The Monk of Farne, ed. Dom Hugh Farmer, O.S.B., Darton, Longmann and Todd, London, 1961, p. 36).

looking upon the servant in love. All the central elements of the "fall" of Adam are missing, including Adam's disobedience, his guilt, and his expulsion from the Garden:

And I beheld with deliberation to discover if I could perceive in him any fault; or whether the Lord would assign to him any kind of blame. And truly there was none seen; for his good will and his great desire were the only cause of his falling. He was as lovable and as good inwardly as he was when he stood before his Lord, ready to do his will. (ch. 51, p. 133).

At the time of the vision, she took what she had seen so far to represent the "higher judgement" which she had seen earlier, in Jesus' face:

This was a beginning of teaching which I saw in the same time: whereby I might come to know in what manner he beholdeth us in our sin. Next I saw that only pain blameth and punisheth: but our courteous Lord comforteth and succoreth. Ever he is of glad countenance to the soul, loving us, and longing to bring us to his bliss. (ch. 51, p. 136).

But if the vision fairly represented the final Judgement, it could still not be reconciled with the teachings of the Church. She was aware of this at the time, and found the vision a puzzle. The solution did not occur to her, she says, for nearly twenty years (ch. 51). Reflecting on the vision as a whole, she turned over the events in her mind in detail: Subsequent to the "fall" of the servant, he is raised up by the Lord. Then he is transfigured, taking a garment of many colours, more beautiful than the Lord's, and is seated at the Lord's right hand. Early on, it occurred to her that the servant was more than the historical Adam who lived in the garden--that he stood for all-men. She still took the Lord to be Jesus, who had come as eternal Judge; and the last transfiguration, she took to be the uplifting of the faithful into Jesus' place.

In this last detail Julian finally hit upon the true meaning of herparable. The Lord is not merely Jesus, who has come to judge mankind, but is

God the Father. We only know the Father in the incarnate Son, however; hence she sees Jesus' face. The servant is not merely Adam, but is the incarnate Son: he "falls" into the place of sin, which is our humanity. The judgement is that of the Father for the Son, whose will is never to do evil. Julian's own words best describe her insight:

I understood not all what this parable meant: and therefore I marvelled whence the servant came.

In the servant is comprehended the second Person of the Trinity. And in the servant is comprehended Adam; that is to say, every-man. Thus, when I say "the son", this meaneth the Godhead which is equal to the Father's; and when I say "the servant", it meaneth Christ's manhood which is the true Adam...The Lord is God the Father: the servant is the Son Jesus Christ. The Holy Ghost is the equal love which is in them both. (ch. 51, p. 139).

It is significant that Julian says, "in the servant is comprehended Adam", just as in the servant is comprehended the Son of God. The vision does not allow simple identifications, because it has been shown on two levels, mystically depicting the Son of God dwelling in mankind. Once she understands this, the vision takes on new meaning altogether. The "higher judgement" of Christ comprehends that of the Church; and the Father's judgement of the Son (upon whom he looks with pity and love) is at once the Son's judgement of the Church. She sees the Son's participation in our "falling" into sin:

And in this falling he took great sore. The sore that he took was our flesh; in which, from the first, he had experience of mortal pains. (ch. 51, p. 142).

If it is true that the Son comprehends Adam, and participates in Adam's (fallen) humanity, then it is also true that, in God's eyes, Adam is able to participate in the full obedience of the Son. The servant runs to do the Lord's will; and in this running, mankind is able to be obedient with the Son. Julian understands that this is why there has been no blame in her visions: when the Father looks upon her (which "beholding" she sees in

Jesus' expressions, of pity and "ruth" and of joy and bliss) he sees the Son. Therefore he "judges" her with his "judgement" of the Son, which is really his Love. She sees too that this Love is the Love of the Trinity, in which the Father and Son are one, and together are one in the Holy Spirit. When the Son becomes one with humanity, we are included in the Love of the Trinity--in the love of the Son. She sees, finally, that nothing in the vision is logical, because she has understood judgement here from a divine perspective. Logically, and quite rightly, she must ask "Where is Adam's blame?" But in faith--in light of divine Love--she is able to exclaim that there is no blame, because the Son of God indwells Adam. This is a profound insight in her understanding of the two kinds of "judgement":

For in all this our good Lord shewed his own Son and Adam as one man. The power and the goodness that we have is of Jesus Christ; the feebleness and blindness that we have is of Adam: which two were shewed in the servant. Thus hath our good Lord Jesus taken upon him all our blame. And therefore our Father nor may nor will any more blame assign to us than to his own well-beloved Son Jesus Christ. (ch. 51, p. 140, Emphasis added.)

The practical implication of the vision is that Julian does not abandon either the "judgement" which she sees in Christ--in which she knows that the Father sees her as he sees the Son--nor the "judgement" of the Church, in which she must see her own guilt, and be ashamed of it. If we are to understand our guilt rightly, both kinds of judgement must be held in mind:

And right thus, our Lord willeth that we accuse ourselves willingly and truthfully, seeing and knowing our falling, and all the harm that cometh thereof; seeing and realizing that we can never restore it; and therewith that we willingly and truly see and know the everlasting love which he hath for us, and his plenteous mercy. To see and know both parts together, thus graciously, is the meek accusing that our good Lord asketh of us. (ch. 52, p. 146).

By "accusing" ourselves, we avoid sin with our will. At the same time, we are not afraid of our Judge; and we avoid sin for its own sake, rather than

for fear of God--which fear would really be a selfish fear for our own well-being. Herein she has seen the two "great deeds" which God shall do and has done. In the final judgement, there is a "great deed" which we cannot understand, but which is hidden in the mystery of the Trinity. At the same time, we can understand that it will be, because in Jesus--who will be our Judge--we see the Father's love. The other "great deed", which begins on earth, has been seen in the incarnation of the Son, and the transfiguration of mankind which has taken place in him. The "oneing" of the soul-to-be-saved with the Son has already taken place; the transfiguration is taking place now, in our own lives, through the Spirit. In a moment we shall see how this "deed" includes the establishment of the Church itself, which is the body of Christ on earth--surrounding us and protecting us with God's Love.

Penance and Absolution in Light of Charity

The majority of the Revelations attempts simply to put forward the content of Julian's visions, without spelling out their implications for the reader. Occasionally, however, she digresses to speak out on a point which she thinks is especially valuable for her "even-christians". One of these is in her discussion of prayer, in which she says that we need not pray by any "means". Another is in her discussion of the sacrament of penance, as she understands it in light of her vision of the Lord and the servant. She does not address herself directly to the sacrament, but to the understanding of penance and forgiveness, in light of the indwelling Christ who has taken our blame upon himself.

Her argument is that God does not desire for us to be harsh with ourselves, seeing that he judges us himself in mercy and grace. God's desire for us is that we trust him and enjoy him, like children who love and obey their Mother.

There is a sense in which self-accusation is essential to this relationship: we must be aware when we are not obedient, and by contrition we must turn from disobedience to love. But we must understand at the same time that our own assessment of our guilt is immature; therefore our judgement of the punishment required (for us to mend our ways) is also immature: God himself will impose on us whatever discipline we require; and in this sense, our whole life is our "penance" before God:

For it is a full lovely meekness in a sinful soul, wrought by the mercy and grace of the Holy Ghost, when we are willing, willfully and gladly, to take the scourging and chastising that our Lord himself will give us. And this shall be full tender and full easy, if only we hold us pleased with him and with all his works. But concerning the penance that a man should take upon himself--this was not shewed me; that is to say, it was not shewed me specifically. But this other was shewed, specially and highly and with a look full of love--that we should meekly and patiently bear and suffer the penance that God giveth us, with mind of his blessed passion. For when we have mind of his blessed passion, with pity and love, then we suffer with him like as did his friends that saw it. (ch. 77, p. 195).

It is possible that in this passage Julian reflects a teaching of the Ancrene Riwe, that the self-imposed disciplines of the anchoress must not be so harsh that they prevent her from praying properly.⁶⁴ On the other hand, her point is that she does not see self-imposed disciplines at all--while the Riwe seeks only to mitigate their extent. There is a subtle difference between "penances" and discipline, which is not always reflected in spiritual guides like the Riwe: An act of "penance" is performed specifically under the direction of a confessor, and is usually understood as an act of atonement for sin. Discipline, on the other hand, is a means towards more perfect prayer, directing the attention away from the world (or the senses) and towards

64 Cf. Ancrene Riwe, Part VIII.

God. In medieval spirituality the two tend to merge, so that both are thought of in terms of punishment. Julian, however, merges them in the other direction--seeing penance as a discipline, but only part of the larger disciplines which are imposed on us by God, in the circumstances of ordinary life. The chief "penance" for the Christian is to suffer from sin itself, by sharing with Christ in his Love, and therefore, in his pain in the crucifixion.

An important point which she makes is that to punish ourselves for sin is, in one sense, fruitless--because it implies that we shall cease to sin, or could somehow account for it through our own suffering. Self-accusation is good if it turns us to Christ. It becomes harmful, however, if it leads us to the notion that we are responsible for sin in general, and that we must make up for it. This would be untrue, in the first place, because sin is our incapacitation through evil, which we cannot ourselves overcome; it is harmful in the second place, because it turns our eyes towards ourselves, and we see ourselves no longer in light of the indwelling Christ:

And this was shewed in the Thirteenth Revelation, near the beginning, where it speaketh of pity. For he saith: "Accuse not thyself that thy tribulation and thy woe is all thy fault. For it is not my will that thou shouldst be heavy and sorrowful without discretion. For I tell you: Howsoever thou doest, thou shalt have woe. And therefore it is my will that thou wisely know the penance which thou art in continually--that thou mayest meekly take it for thy penance. And then shalt thou truly see that all this thy living is profitable penance." (ch. 77, p. 196).

So far, the thrust of Julian's argument has been that God's own "penance" imposed on us in life itself is lighter than any which we might impose on ourselves, and is more to the point. God's judgements are "easy and sweet", while ours are now lenient, now harsh. At one point, however, her words seem to take on an unhappy tone:

This place is a prison: this life is a penance. And in the remedy for it, he willeth that we rejoice. The remedy is that our Lord is with us, keeping us, and leading us to fullness of joy. (ch. 77, p. 196).

It has been pointed out that Julian may be referring to her life as a recluse, and that "this place" indicates the little cell in which she lived for perhaps forty years.⁶⁵ Possibly she is giving us a glimpse of her despondency (her own "changeableness") in the solitary life: The comment does not occur in the Shorter Version, when she did not yet have such long experience as an anchoress. On the other hand it seems doubtful that she would have included this remark if it were meant to refer only to her own feelings of despair at being an anchoress, for two reasons: First, she includes almost no autobiographical material in the Longer Version; and only once, when she specifically indicates that she is about to do so, does she include anything of a confessional nature (ch. 66). Second, the principal point which Julian is making is that in Christ's Love, what is required of us is that we enjoy him, and subsequently love with his love. If she shows momentary depression here, it is uncharacteristic of her book as a whole, and would demonstrate that she does not herself "enjoy" Christ enough to say that life is more than a "prison".

The theological point which Julian is making, if indeed she means that life is burdensome, refers to all of life for all humanity, rather than to her own cell. She may mean simply that because there are woes in life, we have indeed been "in prison"--recalling her observation (in Ch. 40) that Jesus receives us "as though the soul had been in pain and in prison", when

65 By Sister Reynolds, in S G L p. xxxix.

we come to him in love. Apart from Christ, life is a prison indeed, because every pain is seen as an ultimate reality in itself, rather than as part of his own suffering or as part of our chastisement in his love.

One other possibility ought not to be excluded from our thought: she may mean for her words to be taken humorously. She has said that "our Lord is with us", and he is "leading us to fullness of joy". She has exclaimed many times in joy at seeing him, at knowing his love, and so on. If, then, she wished to make her point about the joy of knowing Christ in this life, she may have done it with reference to the wonder of life, rather than its woe. One imagines her pointing out of her window to the garden by St. Julian's: "This place is our prison!" she says; and this is the whole of God's chastisement for those who love him. Later on she refers to the beauty of life, in the joy of one who knows the Lord; and she says that the true "penance" which we bear is that we cannot know him more directly in this life:

Marvellous and stately is the place where the Lord dwelleth. And therefore he willeth that we readily turn us to his gracious touching, having more joy in his all-love than sorrow in our frequent fallings. For of anything that we may do, it is most worship to him that we live, in our penance, gladly and merrily for his love. For he beholdeth us so tenderly that he seeth all our living here to be a penance. For the kind longing in us for him is a lasting penance in us. Which penance he worketh in us, and mercifully helpeth us to bear it. For his love maketh him to long; his wisdom and his truth, with his righteousness, maketh him to suffer us here; and in this manner he willeth to see it in us. For this is our kindly penance, as to my sight. This penance never goeth from us till what time that we be full filled, and have him for our meed. And therefore he willeth that we set our hearts in our out-passing: that is to say, from the pain that we feel into the bliss that we trust to have. (ch. 81, p. 203).

Whenever we feel that we deserve punishment, therefore, we ought to look for the remedy in Christ:

This then is the remedy--that we be aware of our wretchedness, and flee to our Lord. For ever the more needy that we be, the more

speedful it is for us to touch him. And let us say thus, in our meaning: "I know well that I deserved pain. But our Lord is almighty, and may punish me mightily, and he is all-wisdom, and can punish me wisely; and he is all-goodness, and loveth me tenderly." (ch. 77, p. 195).

Finally, she refers once more to our heavenly Mother, who disciplines us in life as is best for us, in his Love. The work of caring for us in this life is the work of the Mother, but it is also "grace"--the work of the Spirit. The "judgement" of our Mother is that he loves us, if he does not love sin in us; and he adapts his "working" with us to our own personal needs:

The kind loving mother understandeth and knoweth the need of her child. She keepeth it full tenderly, as the kind and condition of motherhood will. And ever as it waxeth in age and in stature, she changeth her way of working, but not her love. And when it is come to a more advanced age, she suffereth it to be chastised, for the breaking down of vices, and to make the child receive virtues and grace. This work, with all that is fair and good, our Lord doeth it, in those by whom it is done. (ch. 61, p. 164).

This insight summarizes the vision of "all shall be well". We should trust in our Mother, knowing that we shall sin, that we shall be disciplined in our sin, and that we shall be reared in his Love:

Fair and sweet is our heavenly Mother in the sight of our soul; precious and lovely are the gracious children in the sight of our heavenly Mother, with mildness and meekness and all the fair virtues that belong, in kind, to children. For kindly the children despair not of the mother's love, kindly the child presumeth not of itself, kindly the child loveth the mother and each one of them the other. These are the fair virtues (with all others that are like to them) wherewith our heavenly Mother is served and pleased. And I understood that there is no higher stature in this life than childhood--in the feebleness and failing of might and understanding--until the time that our gracious Mother hath brought us up to our Father's bliss. And there shall truly be made known to us his meaning, in the sweet words where he saith: "All shall be well; and thou shalt see it thyself that all manner thing shall be well." (ch. 63, p. 171).

Faith in Response to Charity

The visions which Julian has, of the "great deeds" and the two kinds of judgement, bring her to a new faith. She relies wholly on the indwelling Christ to be the source of healing from sin, even in the experience of pain (or woe) in life. Here we see an inversion of her thought, which is theologically significant: faith does not make Christ "real" to Julian; but his real presence--in her visions, and more generally in her own soul, as she sees it depicted in the parable of the incarnate Son--creates faith in Julian. Faith becomes, for her, a right understanding of what has already taken place. We see ourselves properly in faith; that is, when we understand ourselves in relation to our Mother, who dwells in us and guides us. Faith is realism, taking into account both our sin and the way in which we are loved, in spite of sin. It is therefore a right understanding of this life itself:

This passing life that we lead here, in our sensuality, is not aware of what our true self is, except in faith. When we come to know and see truly and clearly, what our self is, then shall we, truly and clearly, see and know our Lord God in fullness of joy. And therefore it needs must be that the nearer we are to our bliss, the more we shall long for it: and that both by nature and by grace. We can have knowing of our self in this life by the constant help and power of our high kind. In this knowledge we can increase and grow by the furthering and the speeding of mercy and grace; but we may never fully know our self up to our last moment--when this passing life, and all manner of woe and pain, shall have an end. (ch. 48, p. 123).

Thus faith is the response to Love, which we experience in Jesus--seeing his "judgement" of us, as our Mother. It begins at birth, and is nurtured through our whole lives, by his Love:

And notwithstanding all our feeling--woe or weal--God willeth that we understand and believe that we are more verily in heaven than in earth. Our faith cometh from the kind love for our soul, and from the clear light of our reason, and from the steadfast mind which we have of God, in our first making. And what time our soul is breathed into our body--in which we are made sensual, at once mercy and grace

begin to work, having of us care and keeping with pity and love. In which working, the Holy Ghost formeth, in our faith, hope that we shall come again to our substance up above, having increase and filled full of the power of Christ, through the Holy Ghost. (ch. 55, p. 151).

It will be noted that for Julian, faith does not supplant our use of reason, but develops through it. Nature, mercy and grace work together to inform us of God's Love. The Spirit guides our reason, turning us to Christ through the teaching of the Church:

By three things man standeth in this life; by which three God is worshipped and we are sped, kept and saved. The first is use of man's kindly reason; the second is the common teaching of Holy Church; the third is the inward gracious working of the Holy Ghost--and these three are all of one God. God is the ground of our kindly reason; and God is the teaching of Holy Church; and God is the Holy Ghost. And all are sundry gifts, to which he willeth that we have great reward, attending thereto. For they work in us continually, all together; they are great things. Of which greatness he willeth that we have knowing here--the ABC of them, as it were. That is to say, that we may have a little knowing of that whose fullness we shall have in heaven: which is for our profit. (ch. 80, p. 201).

Through reason, therefore, we may come to know something of the "fullness" of divine Love, as through the Faith of the Church, and through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Trinity is the source of our life (our nature), and of love, and of reason, our "highest gift", which is guided by love:

I had, in a measure, touching, sight and feeling in three properties of God. In which the strength and the effect of all Revelation standeth. And they were seen in every shewing; and most directly in the twelfth, where it is said often: "I it am." The properties are these: life, love and light. In life is marvellous homeliness: in love is gentle courtesy: and in light is endless kindhood. These three properties were seen in one goodness; into which goodness my reason would be oned--cleaving to it with all its might. I beheld with reverent dread, highly marvelling in the sight and in the feeling of the sweet accord--that our reason is in God, understanding that it is the highest gift that we have received: and it is grounded in Kind. (ch. 83, p. 205).

Thus faith is the right (or full) use of reason, perfected by the Love of God. In the remainder of ch. 83 and 84, Julian describes faith as the "light"

of our life, which comes about through the "light" of God--referring especially to the enlightening of the Spirit, in which we see (or reason) clearly.

The "light" of God is his own Being, his Love--the divine nature (endless kind-
hood) which we are meant to reflect:⁶⁶

This light is charity; and the measuring of this light is done to us profitably by the wisdom of God. For neither is the light so large that we can see clearly our blissful day, nor is it all shut out from us. But it is a light such as we may live in profitably with labour--deserving the worshipful thanks of God. And this was seen in the sixth shewing, where it saith:

"I thank thee for thy service and for thy labour."

Thus charity keepeth us in faith and in hope. And faith and hope lead us into charity. And at the end, all shall be charity. (ch. 84, p. 206. The reference is to ch. 14: "I thank thee for thy service, and for the travail of thy youth.").

The Trial of Faith

Although Julian understands faith to be the full use of our reason, in knowing the Love of God, she also understands that the relationship of faith to God is constantly challenged in this life. We have said that in the experience of pain (compassion) our love is deepened, as we see the depth of God's Love for us in pain. Faith, too, is deepened as it is challenged: by guilt, by sin itself (our contrariness to God), by the "blindness" or "unknowing" which comes from sin (in which we look to ourselves, instead of to God, to understand the human condition); and finally, by evil, in the person of the fiend. The last challenge is the greatest, and does not come about until we

66 Walsh identifies "life, love, light" with the traditional Augustinian concept of "mind, understanding and will" as the "made trinity" in the soul (Walsh, p. 36). Julian, however, never speaks of these three categories as "mind, understanding, will", and it would seem that she is making a different point here. It would be difficult to draw a direct analogy between "life" and "mind", or between "love" and "understanding", or even "light" and "will". Julian's theme is closer to Walter Hilton's, that Reason is guided by Love; cf. The Scale, Book I, ch. 14: "How Virtue Begins in the Reason and the Will, and Is Perfected in Love". See also Inge, op. cit., pp. 67-68.

are able to endure it. In her final "shewing" Julian is challenged by a demonic assault on her person, which is meant to destroy her faith. She understands it, however, to deepen her relationship to Christ:

Above the faith there is no goodness kept in this life, as to my sight. And beneath the faith there is no health of soul. But in the faith--there willeth our Lord that we keep us. For we are able, by his goodness and his own working. to keep us in the faith. By his sufferance, through ghostly enmity, we are tried in the faith and made mighty. For if our faith had not enmity, it would deserve no meed. Such is the understanding that I have of our Lord's meaning. (ch. 71, p. 184).

In the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Revelations, she experiences two kinds of challenge to her faith. The first appears to be a renewal of her pain, although she does not say explicitly, except to tell us what she learns in the experience. In any case, it brings about a renewed longing for God, demonstrating the love which she was developing through the experience of her visions. She tells us that she became aware of the "absence" of God in this life, and suddenly felt that this "absence" would be unbearable for her (ch. 64). In this vision she is comforted, and told that she is better not to know the time of her death. She is promised, too, that she will be taken from the context of pain (ch. 65). Possibly this "shewing" is related to the experience of the "night", described by other mystical writers, in which one longs for God more and more acutely, in faith.⁶⁷ If so, she makes little of the experience, confining her remarks to two chapters (as opposed to twenty-three, for the Fourteenth Revelation). Much more serious, to her, is the experience of demonic temptation which followed it.

She tells us that after the first fifteen Revelations, her "shewings"

⁶⁷ See n. 41, above.

ceased and her physical pain returned. She no longer expected to die from her illness, but the spiritual lessons of love and salvation were momentarily forgotten, in her discomfort. She told her priest that she had been "raving" during the day; and immediately felt guilty at having denied her Lord (ch. 66). Thereafter she "lay still" until nightfall, and finally fell asleep. The darkness, and the fact that she was no longer looking to the crucifix, set the scene for her first direct experience of evil during her Revelations. We should note the inversion of all the circumstances of her former visions: darkness as opposed to light, closing her eyes rather than looking to the cross for healing, and surrendering her will to sleep, rather than deliberately fixing her attention in Christ. Significantly, the vision which follows is the only one which might be interpreted as a dream. Formerly, she was awake and aware of the people around her (ch. 8). The implication, therefore, is that during the time of her visions, when her will was occupied with Christ, the fiend had no opportunity to present himself.

The nature of Julian's vision of the "fiend" is fascinating, although it may appear comical to the modern reader unless care is taken to see it apart from contemporary stereotypes. She sees the fiend in the guise of a red character with spots:

And in my sleep, at the beginning, it seemed as though the fiend set himself at my throat, thrusting his face close to mine--the face of a young man, long and incredibly lean: I never saw its like. Its colour was red, like the tile-stone fresh from the kiln, with black spots in it like freckles--dirtier than a tile-stone. His hair was red as rust, cut short in front with side-locks hanging down his cheeks. He looked at me with a malignant grin, shewing his white teeth. And the more he grinned, the more ugly he seemed. Body or hands had he none, of true shape; but with his paws he held me by the throat, and would have stopped my breath and killed me; but he might not. (ch. 67, p. 177).

It will not be our purpose here to analyze the psychological implications of Julian's vision, which makes a study in itself, but to understand its significance for her theology.⁶⁸ Perhaps our first task is to recognize that Julian's description is not meant to be comical in any sense. The details which she relates of the fiend's appearance are meant to show the horror of what she describes. In the "young man" she sees characteristics which are universally recognized as evil: a "malignant grin", the sinister surprise by night in her bed, the attempt to murder her by strangling, an evil smell; and, later, a jangling of voices which mocked the prayer of the rosary. In his "paws" we note the fiend's shaplessness: his "paws" are not endearing features, but indicate the formless, inhuman character of evil. What she sees is murderous, half-animal, malevolent: her prose strains to convey the wickedness of the apparition, and she finds herself unable, in the end, to describe it at all.⁶⁹

Yet it seemed to me that all this could not be likened to any bodily business. (ch. 69, p. 181).

Next, it will be noted that this vision is the fulfilment of her original expectation, before the visions began (described in ch. 2), to be tempted by

68 A book has been written wholly on this subject by Thouless, Robert M., The Lady Julian of Norwich: A Psychological Study, Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, London, 1925, Cf. also Pepler, op. cit., p. 313.

69 The morality plays of Julian's time had already begun to popularize the "horns and tail" image with which we are familiar today. The modern figure, however, is inevitably seen as either comical, slightly ribald, or at worst, mythical and therefore harmless. Readers of Julian who have experienced the demonic personally will on the other hand recognize the accuracy of her description, particularly with regard to the smell, the formless nature of the evil which is being encountered, and an unidentifiable sensation of revulsion, something like nausea. The idea that Satan produced a foul smell was a commonplace in Julian's time, linked with Isaiah 3:24. See Ebon, Martin, Exorcism Past and Present, Cassell, London, 1974.

the "fiends" before her death. She tells us that after the fifteen Revelations, she specifically did not expect to die, and there is no indication that she anticipated the demonic assault any longer (ch. 66). The fact that she was tempted by fiends anyway, even though she was not about to die, indicates to her that she ought to share her experience with other Christians--recalling her puzzling intuition, in the First Revelation, that her visions were meant for the living:

In all this time, I thought I would die; and that was, in a way, wonder and marvel to me; because, it seemed, this vision was shewed for them that would live. (ch. 8, p. 60).

Earlier, she was unable to see sin except in terms of the pain that it causes (ch. 27). She concluded then that evil would be too horrible for her to see directly, and was revealed to her only in light of Christ. In her final Revelation, however, she is permitted to see evil more directly; but it is important that this revelation came only after she had come to a much surer knowledge of her salvation, particularly with regard to her own guilt for sin. From this she learns that if there is to be a demonic assault on any of Christ's lovers, it does not come apart from a vision of his "sure keeping". In the Sixteenth Revelation, she experiences demonic assaults twice. They are separated, however, by a vision of Christ dwelling in her soul (ch. 68) and followed by a renewed vision of her "oneing" in him (ch. 70 ff.). Although the assaults are horrible, she is unharmed, because she is "kept" in Christ: the fiend would have killed her, "but he might not".

Her own assessment of the temptation is that it came because she took her eyes off of Christ, both spiritually and literally. After denying the authenticity of her visions, she felt guilt, followed by uncertainty whether she really had seen them after all:

...I believed him truly during the time that I saw him, and at that time it was my will and meaning ever to do so, without end. But like a fool, I let this pass out of my mind. Alas, what a wretch I was! (ch. 66, p. 177).

In her renewed experience of pain, she also ceased to pray--not only in the sense of "beholding", but even in the sense of petition. She did fall asleep "trusting in his mercy", however. Here, for the first time, she closed her eyes, and ceased to look to the crucifix. Interestingly, the vision of the fiend ceased when she awoke, and looked to the crucifix again:

...then I understood that it was only the fiend, come to tempt me. Then straightaway I betook me to what our Lord had shewed me on the same day, with all the faith of Holy Church (for I beheld both these as one); and fled thereto, as to my comfort. And immediately all vanished away; and I was brought to great rest and peace, without sickness of body or dread of conscience. (ch. 67, p. 178).

In particular, the "shewing" and the faith to which Julian "betook" herself is the recognition that in spite of her sin (especially in denying Christ) she is "oned" to the Trinity, in Christ; and therefore she cannot be overcome by evil. Herein she learns that it is the fiend who tempts us to despair, by representing our guilt. The promptings of evil are not gross goads to sin, for one who is faithful, but take the form of a subtle condemnation:

Neither for weal nor for woe is it his will that we ever flee from him; but because of our changeability we fall often into sin. Then are we affected by the promptings of our enemy, and by our own folly and blindness. For they say thus: "Thou knowest well thou art a wretch and a sinner, and also untrue, for thou keepest not thy covenant. Thou hast promised oftentimes our Lord that thou shalt do better. And immediately thou fallest again into the same sins--especially into sloth and the wasting of time." (For this is the beginning of sin, as I see it, particularly in creatures that have given themselves to serve our Lord by inward beholding of his blissful goodness). And this maketh us adread to appear before our courteous Lord. Then it is that our enemy will abash us with this false dread of our wretchedness and the pain that he threateneth us with. For it is his intent to make us so heavy and so mournful in this that we let pass out of mind the blissful beholding of our everlasting Friend. (ch. 76, p. 194).

Thus the fiend is an accuser; and because of his accusations in the face of our guilt, which is genuine, we "fall". To judge only in light of our guilt, however, is half-truth, forgetting the steadfast Love of God.

Finally, Julian describes the nature of the demonic to be an attack upon the Church as a whole. She hears a noise like two people whispering at once (ch. 69). It is the sound, she realizes, of people praying with a rosary, with "noise of words, with much failing of that devout attention and wise diligence which we owe to God in our prayer". The noise is evil precisely because it is accurate: Many Christians do, in fact, pray with "noise of words", without true devotion or true love of God. Earlier, she had turned to the "faith of Holy Church" in the time of trial. Now the fiend taunts her with the notion that the Church is really a collection of sinners who are doomed. The lie, however, is that the sinners, who are the Church, are really doomed. She meets the temptation to despair with an admission of her guilt, wryly observing that if she were free of sin altogether, the fiends would not have been able to bother her in the first place. But the effect of the temptation as a whole is to turn her more ~~decidedly~~ to God, in the faith of the Church. She wards off the fiend by pronouncing the faith aloud--though it occurs to her (thinking again, perhaps, of her denial of the Revelations) that she would do better to avoid sin, next time, rather than spending her energy in confrontation with the fiends:

My bodily eyes fixed on the same cross (on which I had gazed for my comfort before this time: my tongue I occupied with speech of Christ's passion and with rehearsing the faith of Holy Church: and my heart I fastened on God with all my trust and might. And I thought to myself: "Thou hast now great eagerness about keeping thee in the faith, that thou shouldst not be taken by thine enemies. If now from this time thou shouldst ever more be as busy about keeping thee from sin, this would be a good and sovereign occupation." And I thought: "Truly, were I safe from sin, I would be full safe from all the fiends

of hell and all the enemies of my soul." (ch. 70, p. 182).

Julian's experience of the demonic temptation is significant both in its nature, and in the theological interpretation which she gives to it. First, it is uncommon in English mystical writings to find any description of demonic assault at all. When "temptations of the fiend" are described, they are of a radically different nature: ordinarily, the "fiend" tempts one to mortal sin, through lechery, gluttony, sloth, or other of the vices.⁷⁰ In Julian's case, the fiend's temptation is at once more direct, and more subtle: there is a physical assault, in which he seeks to do violence to her person; and the fiend tempts her to despair, by presenting her with her guilt. The vices are not mentioned here, and certainly the fiend wastes no time on these. Rather, Julian presents the unique situation in which the fiend accuses her with the teachings of the Church--namely, that she is a creature of sin, destined for wrath. Possibly we have, here, an indication of Julian's own sanctity, in that she would not have been tempted to gross sin anyway--although she indicates that she may have been especially prone to "sloth" and to wasting time, two enemies of the anchoress.⁷¹ But her understanding of the demonic is penetrating, and important for her even-christians. Anxiety is a far more common manifestation of evil than is murder, for example, and it is to be found within the Church as well as outside it.

70 Compare the Scale of Perfection, Book I, ch. 37; and the Ancrene Riwe, Part IV. In the Office prepared for Richard Rolle, anticipating his canonization, there is mention of demonic attacks more like Julian's. (Comper, op. cit., p. 307).

71 Cf. ch. 76 of the Revelations. These vices are cited as particular temptations for the anchoress in the Riwe, Part IV (Riwe, p. 90).

Second, she interprets her temptation by the fiend to be positively helpful, insofar as it turns her more strongly to the faith of the Church. Accompanying the assault is a vision of the indwelling Christ, who cannot be separated from her soul; and although the assault is horrible in itself, she learns by going through it that she cannot be harmed by evil. She has been "tried by fire", and has come through unscathed (ch. 63). The nature of evil itself has been self-defeating: In its guises, as for example in the temptation to lechery evil can appear attractive; but in its naked appearance, it is revolting, and only serves to turn us to the love of our Mother. In her experience of evil Julian shows more affinity with Orthodox saints than with her own contemporaries; but there can be little doubt that her conclusions were of immense value for the "even-christians" of her day, as ours:⁷²

...when we are fallen by frailty or blindness, then our courteous Lord toucheth us, prompteth us and keepeth us. And then willeth he that we see our wretchedness, and meekly acknowledge it. But it is not his will that we busy ourselves greatly about our accusing, nor that we be too full of wretchedness about ourselves. Rather he willeth that we hastily turn unto him; for he standeth all alone and abideth us continually in our mourning and moaning, until we come. He hath haste to have us turn to him; for we are his joy and his delight, and he is the health of our life. (ch. 79, p. 200).

Charity: the Gift of the Church

In the section of the Revelations which follows the Sixteenth Revelation, with its demonic assault (ch. 70 ff.), Julian discusses the ways in which her visions, and the last in particular, have deepened her in the faith of the Church, teaching her about its function and its nature. She is particularly concerned with the bond between Christ and her soul, which bond manifests

72 Cf. Zander, Valentine, St. Seraphim of Sarov, trans. Sr. Gabriel Anne, S.S.C., Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, London, 1975.

itself in a deep longing to be with God. In her experience of dread (the Fifteenth Revelation) she fears the "absence" of God, which fear becomes acute in the presence of the demons. Their effect, however, is to turn her to the Church--immediately, in the form of the crucifix provided by her priest, and more generally in the "faith" of the Church (the prayers and the Creed) which springs to her lips. In this she learns that Christ will not be absent from her, because he is always present in the Church itself.

Several aspects of the Church are presented, all of which are concerned ultimately with the gift of divine Love to man in and through the Church. First, is the "communion of saints" who together cannot be defeated by sin--even though the individuals who form the Church can and do fall to sin throughout their lives:

It is his will, then, that we behave as a child, who ever more kindly trusteth to the love of the mother, in weal and in woe. And he will-eth that we betake us, mightily, to the faith of Holy Church; and find in her our most dear Mother, in solace and true understanding, with all the Communion of Saints. For a single person may often be broken--or so it seemeth to the self. But the whole Body of the Church was never broken--nor ever shall be, without end. And therefore a sure thing it is, a good and a gracious, to will, meekly and mightily, to be fastened and oned to our Mother Holy Church; that is, Christ Jesus. For the flood of mercy that is his most dear blood and precious water is plenteous to make us fair and clean. The blessed wounds of our Saviour are open, and rejoice to heal us. The sweet gracious hands of our Mother are ready and diligent about us. (ch. 61, p. 167).

Her concept of the Body of believers as unbroken through time does not dissolve the individual into the Church, but heightens the importance of each individual in his relationship of Love with Christ. We are not only bound together in a common faith, but we are ontologically united by God's own Love:

It is God's will that I see myself as much bound to him in love, as if all that he hath done he had done for me. And thus should every soul think in regard to his Lover. That is to say: the charity of God maketh in us such a unity, that, when it is truly seen, no man can part himself from another. And so each soul ought to think that

God hath done for him all that he hath done. (ch. 65, pp. 174-175).

Second, Julian refers to the Eucharist, which she takes to "nourish" us-- because it is Christ himself given to us. She speaks again of Jesus as our Mother, who must take care of us and feed us:

Wherefore it behoveth him to feed us; for the very dear love of motherhood hath made him our debtor. The mother can give her child to suck of her milk. But our precious Mother Jesus, he can feed us with himself; and doth, full courteously and tenderly, with the Blessed Sacrament, that is the precious food of true life. And with all the sweet sacraments he sustaineth us full mercifully and graciously. And this was his meaning in those blessed words, where he said: "I it am that Holy Church preacheth to thee and teacheth thee"; that is to say, all the health and the life of the sacraments. "All the power and the grace of my word, all the goodness that is ordained to thee in Holy Church, I it am." (ch. 60, p. 164).

The Church, because it is the Body of Christ, is therefore our Mother on earth--the visible evidence of Jesus' Motherhood. In her we are protected from evil and cleansed from sin; and through her we come to heaven:

For this is endless joy to us, in our Lord's meaning, that he shall be our bliss when we come there--he is our Keeper while we are here, our way and our heaven in true love and faithful trust. And of this he gave understanding of all, and especially in the shewing of his passion, where he made me mightily to choose him for my heaven. Flee we to our Lord, and we shall be comforted. Touch we him, and we shall be made clean. Cling we to him, and we shall be secure and safe from all manner of perils. For our courteous Lord willeth that we be as homely with him as heart can think or soul can desire. (ch. 77, p. 196).

The practical significance of these words is that, in the faith of the Church (equating the faith here with Julian's faith, in the bond between Christ and her soul) there is freedom from anxiety, and also from wrath. The principal "peril", in Julian's understanding, is to fall into despair because of our inability to cope with pain (our weakness), or to know ourselves, or to love. This peril can be overcome only in the knowledge that we are infinitely loved

by God, and find our lives in him. Here she expands her image of the Church to include that of the Bride of Christ: the Church is so loved by God that it cannot fall to sin; and if we are identified with the Church by loving him, we are assured that we cannot be separated from God:

And thus, in our making, God almighty is our kindly Father: and God all-wisdom is our kindly Mother: with the love and goodness of the Holy Ghost; which is all one God, one Lord. And in the knitting and the oneing he is our very true Spouse, and we his loved wife and his fair maiden. With which wife he was never displeased; for he saith; "I love thee, and thou lovest me, and our love shall never be parted in two." (ch. 58, p. 158).

Finally, in all her images of the Church--as the corporate Faith, the Body of Christ--the Mother, and the Bride--Julian identifies the Church with Christ himself. The Church is Christ, because he dwells in it and creates it in his Love. To turn to the Church is to receive Christ, which is to receive God. Therefore if anyone is in doubt where he might find God, in seeking rest from "travail" in life, the answer is in the Church itself:

God shewed the very great pleasure that he taketh in all men and women who mightily and wisely receive the preaching and teaching of Holy Church. For he is Holy Church. He is its ground. He is its substance. He is its teaching. He is its teacher. He is the end and the reward towards which every kind soul travelleth. This is known, and shall be known to every soul to whom the Holy Ghost declareth it. And indeed I hope that all those who seek shall speed; for they seek God. (ch. 34, p. 102).

The Church, therefore, is the place where we can find and can give the divine Love which we are meant to have. From the beginning, Julian's visions were not private communications to her, but were lessons of love to be shared, in love, with her fellow men. This appeared to her not in any intellectual sense, but in an immediate, spontaneous love which demanded to be shared:

[Referring to the first "shewing"] Then the bodily sight stinted; but the ghostly sight lived on in my understanding. And I abode with the reverent dread, rejoicing in what I saw, and desiring, as much as I durst, to see more if it were his will, or the same sight

for a longer time. In all this I was much affected in charity towards my even-christians--that they might all see and know the same that I saw; for I would that it were a comfort to them. For all this sight was shewed to all, in general. (ch. 8, p. 60, Cf. ch. 9, p. 61).

The spontaneous charity which she feels for other christians is intimate, because she shares a communion with them which she does not share with those who are "contrary" to her Lover. Those who do not love Christ do not, by definition, share the same "husband", in the sense of intimate love. But it is hardly the case that she feels love only towards her "even-christians", any more than it is true that her Lord loves only those who are in the Church. The openness which she feels in the Spirit extends to all things--even to inanimate things, because they are loved by their creator. Here she develops the notion that in the Church, all creation is recapitulated, or mystically encompassed. This does not mean that all the world is the Church, but that there is a mysterious "oneing" between the Church and the world, mirroring the "oneing" between Adam and Christ in Julian's parable. In the Church, the whole world is reconciled to God:

God is all that is good, as I see it. And God hath made all that is made; and God loveth all that he hath made. Thus he that loveth the whole--all his even-christians--for God, loveth all that is. (For in mankind that shall be saved is comprehended all, that is to say, all that is made, and the Maker of all. For in man is God, and in God is all.) He that loveth thus, loveth all. I am hopeful by the grace of God that he who beholdeth it thus shall be truly taught and mightily comforted when he needeth comfort. (I speak of them that shall be saved. For in this time God shewed me no other.) (ch. 9, p. 61; emphasis added).

The "comfort" of which she speaks is once more, the comfort of faith which is not to be found in the world outside the Church; but the Love which God has is clearly for all things, and the love which the Church shares is also for all the world. In the knowledge of this Love, the Christian finds himself able to

judge with the judgement of God--that is, in Charity. To blame others when we are not blamed ourselves is to turn away from God; and it is also a form of blindness which leads to our own anxiety, because it renews the possibility for blame for ourselves:

The soul that will be at rest, when other men's sins come to mind, should flee from them as from the pains of hell. For the beholding of other men's sins maketh, as it were, a thick mist before the eye of the soul; so that we cannot, for the time, see the fairness of God--unless we behold them with contrition along with the sinner, with compassion on him and with holy desire to God for him. For without this they annoy and trouble and hinder the soul that beholdeth them. This is my understanding of the shewing of the compassion. (ch. 76, p. 193).

In the Church, then, the "wounds" of the Spirit become gifts to the world--keeping us from judgement and turning us to charity. The work of the Spirit is always to upbuild and to encourage. Even in contrition (the special work of the Spirit), we are given joy and strength, which we are able to share with the world:

And grace worketh with mercy; and especially in two properties, as it was shewed. Which working belongeth to the third Person, the Holy Ghost; he worketh by rewarding and giving. Rewarding is a gift--fulfilment of a pledge--that the Lord maketh to them that have laboured; and giving is a courteous working, of grace, full filling and surpassing all that is deserved by creatures. (ch. 58, p. 160)

And again,

Thus I saw how Christ hath compassion on us because of sin. And just as I was before, in the passion of Christ, filled full of pain and compassion, so in this I was, in part, filled with compassion for all my even-christians. (ch. 28, p. 92).

One conclusion for Julian to draw from this is that all who love God, even in the least, share in the same bliss. If we love him, we receive him--and nothing less. Thus the "reward" itself is God's love for each of us personally, in which our service (in love) is publically acknowledged in heaven:

God shewed three degrees of bliss that each soul shall have in heaven that hath willingly served God in any degree on earth. The first is the worshipful thanks of our Lord God that he shall receive when he is delivered out of pain. This thanks is so high and so worshipful that it seemeth that it would fill him even if he received no more. For, methought, all the pain and travail that all living men might suffer could not have deserved the worshipful thanks that one man shall have who willingly shall have served God. The second is that all the blessed creatures that are in heaven shall see this worshipful thanking--he maketh the service of him known to all that are in heaven...The third is that as new and as pleasing as the thanks is when it is first received, even so shall it last without end. And I saw how homely and sweetly was this shewed--that the age of every man shall be known in heaven, and he shall be rewarded for the time of his willing service. And especially the age of them that willingly and freely offer their youth is surpassingly rewarded and wonderfully thanked. But I saw that whenever or what time a man or woman be truly turned to God for one day's service according to his endless will, they shall have all these three degrees of bliss. And the more that the loving soul seeth this courtesy of God, the more eager she is to serve him all her life. (ch. 14, p. 71).

In this account of heavenly reward, Julian describes a paradox: that on the one hand, each soul is rewarded "for the time of his willing service", and the service of one's youth is especially pleasing to God; but that, on the other hand, all three degrees of bliss are given to every soul who has willingly served God in any degree. We do not judge the spirituality of others, because it is a distinction God himself does not make. This is an astounding concept for her time, but a fundamental one for the Revelations. She repeats it again and again, to say that every Christian is indwelt by God himself, that every Christian is the child of the same divine Mother, that God is available to every one of her "even-christians". Her clearest statement of this principle follows the vision of the Lord and servant:

And through the great endless love that God hath to all mankind, he maketh no division, in love, between the blessed soul of Christ and the least soul that shall be saved. For it is full easy to believe and trust that the dwelling of the blessed soul of Christ is full high in the glorious Godhead. And truly, as I understood our Lord's meaning, where the blessed soul of Christ is, there is the substance of all the souls that shall be saved by Christ. (ch. 54, p. 150).

It is for this reason that she does not distinguish, in the Revelations, between the "contemplative"--whether the "proficient" or the "perfect"--and the ordinary Christian with whom she identifies herself. She is even reluctant to admit that her life as an anchoress elevates her, in God's sight, over anyone else; for it is our participation in God's Love which is pleasing to him, regardless of our station:

I am not good because of the shewing, but only if I love God the better. And in as much as you love God the better, it is more profit to you than to me. (I say this, not to them that are wise, for they know it well, but to you that are simple, for your ease and comfort; for we are all one in love.) For truly it was not shewed to me that God loveth me better than the least soul that is in grace. And I am sure that there are many that never have shewing nor sight except of the common teaching of Holy Church, who love God better than I. For if I look to the whole--then I am, in hope, in one-head of charity with all my even-christians. For in this onehead standeth the life of all mankind that shall be saved. (ch. 9, p. 61).

Following upon this conclusion is another, which marks a striking difference between Julian and her contemporaries, particularly Walter Hilton and the tradition of Christian mysticism following Pseudo-Dionysius. She does not see any mediation between "the least soul to be saved" and Christ himself, through whom we have access to God; therefore, she does not see the angels, who in other theologies, are the mediators, along with the saints. She does not question the existence of the angels, but merely notes that they did not appear to her--deepening her insight into the nature of "oneing", and perhaps raising her somewhat above her contemporaries:⁷³

I believe and understand the ministrations of Holy Angels, as theologians tell; but this was not shewed to me. For himself is nearest

73 Julian may refer here to Walter Hilton: The last chapter of the Scale is concerned with the "ministry" of the angels.

and meekest, highest and lowest, and doeth all that is worshipful to our joy in heaven. And where I say he abideth us in our mourning and moaning, this meaneth all the true feeling that we have in ourselves of contrition and of compassion, and all the mourning and moaning that we are not oned with our Lord. And in as much as it is profitable it is Christ in us. And though some of us feel it seldom, it passeth never from Christ, till what time he hath brought us out of all our woe. (ch. 80, p. 201).

Finally, the Church is the body of praise and joy, because of its anticipation to be "oned" eternally to the Lord, sharing in his bliss. The relationship which we have with Christ in the Church is one of "enjoying"---of intimate love, which is not shared where Jesus is unknown or feared. She sees that the whole purpose of her Revelations themselves is to share the knowledge of his love, so that others might share in her joy:

And all this was shewed in ghostly understanding, seeing this blessed word, "I keep thee full surely". And by the great desire that I saw in our blessed Lord, that we should live in this manner--that is to say, in longing and in enjoying, as all this lesson of love sheweth, thereby I understood that all that is contrary to this is not of him, but it is of enmity. And it is his will that we know it, by the sweet gracious light of his kind love. (ch. 82, p. 204).

Julian ends her own Revelations with words which reveal the creation of divine Love in her. These words, by their beauty, lift theology out of intellectual prose into poetic love. Like the psalms, or a prayer in the Spirit, they are the response of a soul to the Lord, to whom she is truly "oned" in love:

Thus was I learned that love is our Lord's meaning. And I saw full surely in this, and in all, that before God made us, he loved us. Which love was never slaked, nor ever shall be. And in this love he hath done all his works. And in this love he hath made all things profitable to us. And in this love our life is everlasting. In our making we had beginning: but the love wherein he made us was in him from without-beginning. In which love we have our beginning. And all this shall we see in God without end. Thanks be to God.

CONCLUSIONS

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Problems in the Revelations

There are some problems in Julian's theology as we have it in the Revelations, though her difficulties are not necessarily those which have been pointed out in the literature about her. There has been some discussion over the legitimacy of her claims that there is no wrath in God; that she did not see evil, and so understood it to have no substance at all; and that the soul-to-be-saved contains a will which never consented to sin. Some modern theologians would be willing to accept these statements on their own, out of context, to mean that: there is nothing which displeases God; that evil does not exist (i.e., it is an apparition, or unhealthy attitude on our part); and that people are basically good (i.e., that at the center of every human soul is at least a spark of divine goodness which "resists evil and remains in union with the central fire of Divine life and light."¹). But it does not appear that Julian means any of these things.

Her assertion that there is no wrath in God is made to comfort her readers, lay-Christians like herself, so that they would not be afraid of God but love him. We might go further to say that Julian received her vision for this reason. She perceives that "God is love," and is not subject to whim as are human beings. She is well-aware of the wrath, or displeasure, of God for sin and even for the sinner as she points out several times in the Revelations, especially in chapters 33 and 76. Two of the seven Penitential Psalms (Vulgate 6 and 37) refer explicitly to the anger of God, and she would have said these Psalms every day as part of her office. Both these Psalms, however, as well as the scriptures

1 Inge, op. cit., p. 70.

generally support her vision of God as the God of love, who does not judge us with anger but with compassion, upholding us with his love.

Her second assertion, that evil has no substance, was common in her day and is suggested by pseudo-Dionysius as well as by St. Augustine.² It is also held by John of Damascus and Orthodox Fathers generally, though these probably did not have any historical influence on Julian. She simply means that evil does not participate in the substance of God and that God does not do evil things. It is important to recognize in her work the relational character of evil: it is not anything which is done but is the absence of God's will in our lives.

Finally, Julian's doctrine of the goodly will within the Christian man should be understood quite simply, without reference to the philosophical systems to which it has sometimes been compared (e.g., Neoplatonism and Meister Eckhardt). She means that the Christian man is indwelt by Christ, whose will is always good. That she is referring to Christ, and not to an inherent pure will in every man to will the will of God, is pointed out numerous times, especially in her insistence that she saw only the Christian man in her visions. In chapter 59 she identifies Christ with this will: "in him we have this godly will whole and secure without end." At the same time, she is describing a capacity of the Christian soul, owing to the union which exists between God and the soul-to-be-saved. If God does not view the saved soul with reference to time, then Christ has indwelt that soul from the beginning. We are destined, as St. Paul says (Ephesians 1 and 2, Romans 8:28-30) to live for the glory of

2 It is to be noted, however, that the Dionysian understanding of evil differs from Julian's. Pseudo-Dionysius agrees that evil is not made by God, but holds that it is useful only insofar as it is admixed with good (since it cannot be "behovely" in itself). See The Divine Names in Rolt's translation, op. cit., ch. IV, pp. 86 ff. (cited by Reynolds in "Some Literary Influences", op. cit., p. 7.)

God. From God's point of view, we are eternally his, and the Holy Spirit is at work in us, willing the will of God. There can be little argument that she adopts the language of popular medieval theology, as when she seems to refer to the "scintilla" of the soul:

For in the point where our soul is made sensual, there in the same point is the city of God ordained for him from without beginning." (ch. 55)

However, the "point where our soul is made sensual" refers to the relation between our souls and our bodies; it is also a reference to the Incarnation and emphasizes the fact that the "city of God" is meant to dwell within us in this life in such a way that it can be seen ("sensual" implying "visible").

There are other problems in the Revelations. Julian is imprecise in her discussion of evil. She would probably point out, however, that she inquired about it several times, realizing that she did not have a very deep understanding of it; but she was never shown anything more in her visions. She does have an apparition of the fiend (ch. 67), which one presumes is in response to her continual request to glimpse hell and the damned. When she does finally see the fiend, she concludes that evil is far worse than she reckoned. On the other hand, (as in ch. 67) she learns that evil has no power over her soul. She does not discuss the problem of God's will with relation to evil, however. What is the difference between what God "does" and what God "allows"? To what extent is man culpable for his actions? She says that the soul-to-be-saved is not viewed with blame (ch. 27) because he is saved already; however, God does not even want to hear about those souls who follow after evil and are damned (ch. 33). The point here is not damnation or punishment but that sin is so distasteful to God and causes him such pain that it is never mentioned before him. It is also a subtle notation of the fact that it is no praise to God to refer to sin.

Julian later argues, in a way which may be unique, that each of our "sins" is turned to a corresponding blessing (ch. 38) because of the love which God has for us. And she maintains all along that there will be a "great deed" at the Last Judgment which will surprise Christians in that it will apply directly to those who are damned, and which will make all things well in our sight. This echoes the theology of Romans 11 although she does not refer to Paul explicitly. She does anticipate the objection that her idea needs further explanation by saying first that we cannot understand such a great deed (owing to the logical contradiction involved in so far as justice and the righteousness of God seem to imply damnation); and second, she points out adroitly that she was instructed to leave all speculation about it aside (ch. 33). The latter is more than simply an escape clause, because it makes the theological point--always held in Orthodox theology--that the Trinity cannot be known to us except as he wills to reveal himself. We cannot "second-guess" the relation of the Trinity to the heathen any more than we can understand the nature of God himself, who is ultimately beyond our grasp.

Julian does not spell out clearly her understanding of the sacraments and their possible role in atonement although she does refer to them once, in general, as gifts of the Spirit (ch. 57). This omission in itself may be significant, however, in that it implies a rejection of the idea that the sacraments themselves are efficacious for salvation (at least apart from right disposition). She refers occasionally to baptism in this light (as in ch. 33) to say that baptism itself does not guarantee the salvation of anyone. A baptized soul, in other words, does not necessarily live like one and might cause more pain to God than an individual who had never encountered Jesus at all. She does point out, however, that the sacraments are given to us in the context of the Church body as a

part of the healing body by which we are surrounded. We are given salvation first, which is prior even to our own creation; then we are given faith; then the sacraments, each in its own order (she does not say whether she means "order of importance", or, more probably, sequential order); and then "every sort of virtue" (ch. 57). It is significant that the virtues follow faith and the sacraments, because she is pointing out the importance of our inherence in the Church, the body of Christ. This is where the Holy Spirit is at work, and the virtues that we have, like the sacraments, are ours "by the workings of mercy".

Finally, she does not give concrete suggestions how her vision of prayer, the contemplative life, community, and Christian service can become realities for us; for example, how one might become properly "contemplative" (she does not use this word, but does refer to looking upon Jesus in prayer), or how a church might experience the living community of believers which her theology implies. She would not have thought of making these suggestions because of the time in which she wrote, and because she was "no teacher". But neither does she need to spell them out, because they are all created charity--created by the Spirit, ours by following Jesus (in our "pilgrimage"). If we are in the attitude of beholding him with the Church (his body) at the center of our lives, these things will follow. Obviously prayer is a beginning, even the simplest prayer, because "prayer oneth the soul to God." Perhaps we should practice most the prayer which became Julian's in the Spirit: "God, of thy goodness, give to me thyself"; or, like the "Jesus prayer" of the Orthodox, "Good Lord, be merciful, blessed may thou be."

It is sometimes argued by modern students that Julian's life as a recluse would cut against anything she might say about communion and love for fellow-man. There are several points, however, which need to be made here: 1) Julian

is emphatic that right prayer, community, Christian compassion, and other expressions of divine love all come about in the relationship which we have to Jesus in faith by the Holy Spirit. She does not devote time to a discussion of how they might be achieved, because in her vision she was never shown how they could be achieved at all. They are simply "graces" of God which accompany faith. Her failure to analyze the stages of contemplation, or mystical union, through which she had passed herself, or to suggest how one might come about them, is precisely because she could not make such an analysis in the light of her visions: "And through the great endless love that God hath to all mankind, he maketh no division, in love, between the blessed soul of Christ and the least soul that shall be saved" (ch. 54). Seeking is as good as finding in God's eyes (ch. 10)--or rather, as good as beholding (which implies the type of contemplative prayer in which we behold the face of the Lord). It is true that different Christians experience different "workings of mercy," such as Julian's vision itself, which is the "beholding" to which she specifically refers in the Revelations (as in chapter 10). On the other hand, she was not interested in seeing how she had "progressed" in her contemplative life, because she did not view her experience as a sign of progress at all except insofar as she might then love her fellow-man more (ch. 9). Her vision was merely a grace of the Lord Jesus, a sign of his love which was to be shared.

2) Any contemporary criticism of Julian's way of life as a recluse is likely to miss the point by not taking into account the role of an anchoress in her society. By withdrawing from society, she actually became far more active in it, certainly more influential in the lives of her "even-Christians." This came about because she was able to devote all her time to contemplating her visions, and hence to composing her book; and also because her contempor-

aries came to her for advice. Margery Kempe's Book makes it clear that devout persons such as Julian were consulted by the population and were highly respected by the community, even playing an influential role in politics because of their relation to important figures (cf. the influence of Catherine of Siena on the political history of the time). The role of the spiritual advisor who is able to devote his whole time to prayer and who can give advice because he is free from everyday harrassment needs to be reevaluated in our own time.

In recent years there has, in fact, been a renewed awareness of the role of the anchoress and anchorite in society, marked by an increasing number of contemplatives who are living under vows, both in communities and in the solitary life in all parts of the world, and in all parts of the Church.³ Because of the nature of their calling, they are not usually in the public eye and would not wish to be so. The two anchoresses who currently live near Julian's Norwich--one of whom has been in her anchorhold for over forty years--have asked that their locations would not be published. Yet their communion with the society around them cannot be doubted: of the two Norfolk anchoresses, one exercises a remarkable ministry of counselling and healing, while the other, who is for all purposes absolutely cut off from the world, nevertheless remains in intimate touch with the news events and social changes of our time--solely, it would seem, through prayer.

3) Julian's theology itself, once it has been grasped, frees the lay Christian to love and to live in communion with his fellow-Christians, through a renewed understanding of God's grace. Julian recognized this fact, and it

3 See "The Desert Revival", in Time [magazine] April 19, 1976, p. 98; and McLean, Michael, "Hermits Today", in Handbook, p. 33.

is the reason (as she tells us) that she had her visions written down. If we trust in God's love for us and "hold fast" (in her words) to his union with us in Christ, then we are naturally open to praise and to joy, and we have the capacity to be open to others. This is why Julian asserts that some of the gifts of the Christian life come by nature as well as by grace. There is no point in attempting to achieve a bond to one another in the Church, however, because this does not come by any natural means. It comes about only in divine charity: in faith, in the unity of the sacraments, in prayer, and in worship generally, by the Holy Spirit. This unity is already provided for us in the Church (ch. 61), though we may not experience it as individuals because of our failure to trust the Holy Spirit to work for us.

Contributions: A Theology of Divine Love

The Revelations is not a shallow work, despite its simplicity of language and of thought, a characteristic which tends to be heightened when it is put into modern words. It provokes thought in a number of areas including the whole approach in western theology to the nature of the atonement, the purpose and meaning of prayer, the role of the Church in our own healing and the healing of others, and even to human psychology. Some of the salient features of the Revelations are as follows:

1) Julian's understanding of the Trinity: The nature of her continual emphasis on the Trinity suggests an important part of our western heritage which is now virtually lost and is to be found predominately in the East. Some mystical theologians of Julian's time write in a similar style, insofar as they mention the Trinity and utilize a three-fold pattern in their syntax (cf. the works of Ruysbroeck and Richard Rolle). But Julian emphasizes the relationship

of indwelling in the Trinity, going beyond the Augustinian idea that the Holy Spirit is a kind of "love-bond" between the Father and Son. For her, the Holy Spirit plays a far greater role in salvation, and the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are "substantially oned". This has implications in her understanding of Christology, especially in the relationship between the humanity and divinity of Christ.

In the west, there is a tendency, following Augustine, to emphasize the individuality of the Persons of the Trinity and a corresponding tendency to isolate the divinity and humanity of Christ as totally alien "natures" (the key problem under discussion at the Council of Chalcedon). Julian's concept, on the other hand, stresses the relational character of the Trinity, such that the three Persons are substantially one--"Where Jesus appeareth, the Blessed Trinity is understood, as I see it" (ch. 4). Correspondingly, the relationship between divinity and humanity of Christ is one of indwelling rather than "joining together". The humanity of Christ proceeds from his divine nature and was created for it. Furthermore, all human beings share in the same humanity. In other words, we understand humanity in light of Christ--not the reverse.

2) The relation between human personality and the nature of the Trinity:

Julian's concept of the Incarnation, as we have said, is that we share in the humanity of Christ rather than the reverse. This has direct implications for her understanding of human psychology and the nature of faith. First, the fact that we are substantially one with God already (because of the Incarnation) allows us to have faith. It is not the case that our faith brings about union with God, because this would be impossible. Thus, we have an ontological union with the Trinity in Christ, not merely a psychological one. Second, the concept

of the Trinity as a "oneing" (which we may call Persons-in-communion) is a model of the nature of human relationships as they ought to be, because we were made in the image of the Trinity. We are meant to live in communion with God, and in communion with one another, just as the Persons of the Trinity are in communion with one another. Julian corrects a tendency in Western theology to see atonement as a "personal" (i.e., individual) relationship to God instead of a corporate one. An implication of this line of reasoning is that oneing, or atonement, is not simply an abstract relationship which we cannot see; it has direct bearing on our psychology and our interaction with others. The Church is meant to be a visible community (communion) in which each individual is surrounded by love in an immediate, every-day sense; the Church is not an "invisible" body of individuals who only meet together for the purpose of worship (cf. ch. 9). From God's point of view, we are substantially one person already in Christ; our relationship to other Christians is an organic one. We cannot be individual persons, and for this reason, we cannot be ourselves at all apart from our unity in Jesus.

3) Freedom in the Christian life: The freedom which we have as Christians is the freedom to be ourselves, persons in reflection of the Trinity. This does not mean that something is super-added to humanity as we already know it, but that our essential communion with God becomes more and more manifest in us as the Spirit works within us in our lifetime. We are not holy in this lifetime, in the sense that we cease to live in a relationship of sin to God and to others (experiencing the pain that accompanies it), but we do share in the life of Jesus, which is holy. Our sharing takes two forms: in the joy which the Son has, in his communion with the Father; and in the suffering and

compassion which he experiences, looking upon our sin, and living in the midst of it. In each of these dimensions we are aware of the working of Christ in all things. Therefore, we are free to love all things, to live without judging others, to experience pain patiently, and above all to live in a relationship of love towards the Father, and therefore of deep and lasting joy.

Julian's emphasis on the joy of the Christian and his freedom to act without anxiety stems directly from her theology of the Trinity and the sovereignty of God. If God is at work in all things, then we are able to relate to all things in an attitude of praise. We are intimately related to all things, because we love the One who has made them. We are aware that nothing has power over us, because nothing happens except by the will of God--who loves us beyond our knowing. This attitude of freedom in relation to the material world is described by the Fathers as apatheia, passionlessness. It means that we are free to care about the world in a far deeper sense than ordinarily, because we are able to feel compassion from Jesus' point of view, and correspondingly, joy from Jesus' view of the Father. Only Jesus, then, has power over our emotions: we do not become either obsessed or despondent, over-enthusiastic or angry, but see all things in light of the cross. It is interesting to note that her decidedly predestinarian theology (in what is perhaps a deeper understanding of it than we customarily see in the west) results in precisely the opposite emphases from those we commonly think of as "predestinarianism".

4) The healing power of God's love: Nothing has power, in heaven or on earth, except the Love of God, which is identical with God himself. This means that oneing is not simply prompted by love, as Julian sees it, but love itself brings about the healing which we call "atonement". To make this point, she frequently relies on the image of mother and child, father and son, husband

and wife. God is Father, Mother, Lover--in other words, it is this loving relationship itself which gives us life. Thus at-one-ment is not something which is worked out "over our heads", so to speak, by some sort of legal arrangement within God (as one might crudely characterize the Anselmic doctrine of atonement as Julian probably knew it). Instead, atonement is worked out in us from within our very souls. We experience pain as a result of sin, the pain of separation from God. God's love heals that pain as God lives within us; and God's love at work in us heals the pain of others. Bound up with this theme is Julian's concept of the "homely loving" of God: God loves us intimately, such that his love can be experienced and known. We know that children like to be held, because it gives them security and joy; furthermore, it teaches them to love. For Julian, this is a model of the way in which the Trinity loves us. The purpose of the Church is to visibly surround us with the love of God, just as a mother wraps her arms around her child. The love which we feel in the body of Christ communicates love to others. It is a key point for Julian that love itself, and not any form of command, compels love in human beings.

In observing that love compels love, Julian also notes the interplay between love and faith. We would not recognize (or be open to) the love of the Trinity apart from faith; we only know of this love by trusting that Jesus is the Lord, and by trusting in him. In this sense, faith precedes love inasmuch as we experience God's love in the context of faith. Julian grasps the whole of an issue which was perhaps less perfectly understood two centuries later at the Reformation. The Catholics rightly held that love is the greatest gift of the Spirit, that love "informs" faith, that love brings about faith in those who are outside the Church, and that only love compels love. On the other hand,

certain reformers rightly held that this love is itself the right relationship of faith or rather, of being faithful to God in Christ.⁴

5) The theology of compassion: Because we are substantially "at one" with the Son of God, we are able to share his joy in knowing the Father. This bliss will be fully ours in heaven, when we live in visible communion with God. Meantime, we also share in the compassion and suffering which we see in the crucified Christ. This happens in two ways: First, the Christian is able to be compassionate in an intimate way which cuts across all social boundaries, because he is of one mind with the creator and saviour of all people, who loves them all infinitely. He is aware of the potential of each person he meets-- that is, of the essential humanity which they have in Christ. This awareness produces pain in us (just as for Christ) when we see people who are suffering because of the sin with which their lives are identified. A simple model of this is the pain which we feel when someone we love does something foolish or harmful to ~~himself~~. Second, the Christian is called upon by the Father to become the target of hatred in the world in order to heal that hatred (sharing in the crucifixion of Christ). The Christian may, for example, suffer the anger without retaliation. This openness to suffering, in which we absorb the violence in others until it is played out, is vital for the healing of those around us. It is the expression of communion in the context of sin. Within the body of Christ (as within the Trinity), communion means openness only to mutual joy and delight in the unity of God's love and his will; it is indwelling. In the world the Christian does not experience indwelling but instead is open to hatred and suffering owing to the diversity of wills and lack of love around him.

4 Cf. Melancthon's Apology to the Augsburg Confession, Art. IV, para. 218 ff. (in The Book of Concord, trans. Theodore Tappert, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, p. 137); compare ch. 84 of the Revelations.

6) The nature of prayer: Like Orthodox mystics, Julian sees prayer primarily in terms of beholding the face of God (the face of Jesus). It is, therefore, the beholding of what God is already doing in the world and in ourselves. Prayer itself comes from God the Holy Spirit; therefore, we do not need to be anxious about the way in which we pray. We are freed to praise God continually; but if we despair, or feel the need to make a request of God, we have the assurance that God is nevertheless praying within us according to his own will. The most rewarding prayer is that in which we only desire to know God, that is, to experience his indwelling. Julian suggests that contemplation of the face of God (theoria) leads to our partaking more and more in the life of Jesus (theosis), taking on the divine nature. For her, too, all of life is prayer in God's eyes; therefore, it is far more important to be lovingly disposed toward God continually than to be concerned about the method of prayer which we use, or how long we pray, or in what words. Our whole life is an offering to God, which is pleasing to him when it springs from him.

Significantly, Julian anticipates modern Catholic thought regarding the concept of Mary as the model for the Church and for prayer. It is not that Mary is our mother--for Christ is our Mother--but that she is the Mother of God, a far more profound fact which has direct bearing on our lives. Because God became incarnate by the Virgin, we know that we have accessibility to God. Mary is proof in herself that we have been oned to God: hers is a mystical union in which she gave herself willingly to God as his servant, suffered in his suffering, and rejoices in his glory. The Gospels give us a picture of Mary, too, which teaches us how to pray both in ecstatic joy and quiet contemplation. These concepts have never ceased to be emphasized by Orthodoxy; but in the west

they have often given way to the concept of Mary as mediatrix. Recently, however, in the Vatican II statements on Mary, she is seen once more as the Mother of God, depicting the "mystery" of Christ and the Church, the model for contemplative prayer. Here we see Julian's vision beautifully echoed in the voice of the Western Church.⁵

7) Psychology and our understanding of human nature: Julian's implications for modern psychology are profound and have direct practical applications for the Church. In the understanding of her Revelations which has been outlined here, the ontological side of her theology has been stressed as opposed to a purely psychological view of love, or of faith, or of at-one-ment. This is not to ~~say~~ ^{ARGUE} that she understands our relationship to God in purely ontological terms; she is obviously used to the language of her times and does speak of love, faith, sin, and the "Godly will" in moral/affective terms. But at the same time, she understands the psychology of oneing to be grounded in its ontology. What we are and do depends upon our relationship to God in our being--not merely upon what we think or will; and this relationship does not vary according to our own "changeableness", or God's fancy. Our "faith" or lack of it does not determine our relationship to God, in other words.

We have seen that Julian locates human nature in the Being of God; therefore, our whole approach to psychology itself is called into question. We are used to understanding God according to the psychology of man; this has been true even in so-called "evangelical" Christianity, which has really grown out of a psychological understanding of at-one-ment: namely, that we relate to

5 See the "Dogmatic Constitution of the Church" (de Ecclesia), Catholic Truth Society, London, 1966, pp. 77 ff.

God in terms of moral "conversion", or as a prisoner before a Judge. But let us suppose that man is really to be understood in terms of the Being of God; and, therefore, that human psychology is to be grasped in terms of God's self-revelation to man. Not only is our concept of at-one-ment radically altered from a psychological and juridical relationship to an ontological one, such as that of child to parent, or the model of indwelling--but our understanding of human behaviour is altered as well.

In Julian's view, man becomes fully human only when he becomes "divine"--not "becomes God", in the sense of replacing God (which is the demonic, and which characterizes much of modern philosophy) but shares in the glory of God, his ecstatic Being. We know ourselves only when we know God; we can love only when we experience true Love; we know joy when we can enjoy true Bliss, or "blessedness" (which is God). More radically, we can live only through the life which is given by the Holy Spirit. Thus, death may be understood as the ontological result of evil, which is non-being or ultimate de-personalization. To be "contrary" to Christ, too, results in pain in our lives. Her idea of "contrariness" implies nothing about those who do not know Christ; for it is possible to be either contrary or obedient even without knowing it, though the intimate relationship of the Church (a marriage, as it were, to God) is impossible outside the body of Christ. But it does mean that the pains produced by evil--Julian especially cites wrath, anxiety and dread--will take their toll in every human being, both in spiritual and in physical well-being.

It is well known today that the relationship between body and mind, or for those who accept [^]~~reality~~^{SPIRITUAL}, of body and spirit, are much greater than has been recognized in earlier psychology and physiology. Stress, for example, has direct bearing on heart function, alertness, ability to relax, and even

on metabolism (leading, perhaps, to certain diseases, such as arteriosclerosis). Julian anticipates this discovery by showing the organic relationship between body and mind, or more importantly, body and soul--that part of our being which is permanently bound to God from our creation. She has simply showed that if we deny our oneing to God in Christ by our actions or by our will or even our fear, we unconsciously harm ourselves--we suffer, and we "fall".

Certain schools of thought in modern psychology have duplicated, in a sense, some of Julian's insights in what is known as "humanistic psychology". The problems of anger, stress, fear, and inability to cope with death are understood in terms of man's failure to grasp his genuine potential, or of his alone-ness (when man is made to be intimately related to other men in what Julian would call "homely love"), or of his "acceptance" by others or by God.⁶ These advances in psychology--and they appear to be advances in terms of their success in psycho-therapy--were anticipated by Julian six centuries ago and should be welcomed by the Church today. Yet they only echo the Church's knowledge of human reality and can miss the mark altogether when they locate man's potential in himself. If Julian is right to say that "God is kind (human nature) in his Being" (ch. 62) or that "where the blessed soul of Christ is, there is the substance of all the souls that are saved (healed) by Christ" (ch. 54), then man's capacity is not limited to himself nor is it found there; it is limited only by the measure of God's love poured out in Christ, which love has no bounds.

6 See Bugental, J. F. T., The Search for Authenticity: An Existential-Analytic Approach to Psychotherapy, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., New York, 1965; and May, Rollo, et. al., ed., Existence: A New Dimension in Psychiatry and Psychology, Basic Books Inc., New York, 1958.

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The full significance of Julian's theology, which in itself is both simple and profound, has yet to be outlined. It should be clear, however, that her visions contain the most important elements of orthodox Christian thought; and at the same time, have implications for contemporary psychology and our understanding of what the Church is in society. The fact that her insights are not complicated or particularly difficult to understand should not be disparaged. A large part of the significance of her work lies in its simplicity; it might even be argued that the more complex works of her contemporaries (notably the author of The Cloud) have less relevance to the lives of ordinary Christians and may even miss the mark altogether in their assessment of the nature of atonement. Like Thomas à Kempis' Imitation of Christ, Julian's book finds its importance in the fact that it is not a scholastic work but sets out one Christian's understanding of God's grace in Christ as it was revealed to her, for the benefit of her "even-Christians". In contemporary psychology and its applications in our churches, it would seem that her insights are only now being achieved. In theology, her contribution deserves to be heard: it is a theology of divine Love, conceived in her vision of God and continually renewed in her "beholding" of Jesus' face, which "beholding" we deserve to share. The shewings were hers for no other reason than God's Love:

What, wouldst thou know thy Lord's meaning in this thing? Know it well. Love was his meaning. Who sheweth it thee? Love. Wherefore sheweth he it thee? For Love. Hold thee therein. Thou shalt know more in the same, but thou shalt never know other therein, without end.

APPENDIX

THE INFLUENCE OF SCRIPTURE ON THE REVELATIONS

At the close of one manuscript of the Revelations of Divine Love there is a colophon which contains the following warning:

And beware thou take not on thing after thy affection and liking,
and leve another: for that is the condition of an heretique.
But take every thing with other. And, trewly understanden, All
is according to holy Scripture and groundid in the same.
(Warrack, p. 204).

The advice is sound enough. Anyone who has studied the Revelations would agree that the work is best understood as a whole, rather than in bits and pieces out of context. The second half of the statement, however, poses more of a problem. To what extent is the Revelations, indeed, "groundid" in "holy scripture"?

The scribe who wrote this colophon may have had two things in mind: first, that Julian of Norwich actually quotes from the Bible, or at least refers to it, in the Revelations; and second, that what Julian says is adequately supported in substance by scripture, and can therefore be accepted as orthodox Catholic theology. Both assertions have lacked support from Julian scholars in recent times.

Most of Julian's modern editors agree that the Bible played some role in the formation of the Revelations. Sr. Reynolds writes in her introduction to the Shorter Version that "By far the most important single influence (on the Revelations) is the Bible, both Old and New Testaments."¹ On the other hand, demonstrating the influence of particular Bible passages on the text of the Revelations itself can be a formidable task.

1 Reynolds, SGL, p. xviii.

The task is complicated by the nature of the scriptures which she might have read or heard in composing the Revelations. Her most obvious source would have been the Vulgate, which, if she read it herself, would naturally have required a working knowledge of Latin. The Vulgate was hardly a standardized text in her lifetime, so that, assuming that she could read the Latin text, we would have to allow for variations from our own extant editions. At the very best, then, it is difficult to demonstrate even a direct quotation.

In light of the arguments against her literacy, we should bear in mind the possibility that Julian did not read from the Bible itself. If she did not, there are two other possibilities: that someone read to her from the Vulgate, freely translating for her; or that she heard readings from an English version of the Bible (or portion thereof) already prepared. If she knew scripture through free translation, it would be still more difficult to demonstrate the actual texts to which she refers; if the text of the Vulgate was erratic, extemporaneous translations certainly were. If, on the other hand, she knew the scriptures from some English version, we cannot necessarily be sure of her source, since not every English text would have survived to the present day.

These observations raise another question concerning Julian's sources, which is even more basic--and which has been largely ignored in the literature about Julian. To what extent were the scriptures generally available in Julian's time at all, whether in Latin or in English? It is not enough to assume that she read scripture, or even had it read to her; we must be sure that there were scriptures to be read. Thus we have essentially three areas of difficulty in demonstrating her use of scripture: her own competence in reading the scriptures (which is difficult to demonstrate one way or the other); the evidence from the text of the Revelations itself that scripture has been

incorporated into it (difficult to prove because of the problems of translation and of variations in the possible sources); and the availability of any texts at all to Julian. The simplest of these to investigate is the text of the Revelations itself, which can give us some idea, at least, of whether Julian was as familiar with the Bible as her scribe claimed that she was.

In her introduction to the Shorter Version, Sr. Reynolds suggests three ways in which scripture appears in the text of the Revelations: 1) use of direct quotations, which she observes are "usually short and sometimes inaccurate, as if (Julian) were relying on her memory"; 2) concepts adopted from the scriptures; and "'unconscious' use of scripture, namely, the clothing in biblical language of a theme not in itself biblical, and...frequently use of scriptural phraseology." She concludes that the last of these categories "most clearly demonstrates (Julian's) close familiarity with the text of the Bible, either in the Vulgate or in the vernacular."²

As is well known, there is only one instance in the whole of the Revelations, in its Longer Version, in which Julian explicitly refers to the Bible. In ch. 15 she writes:³

And in the tyme of Joy I myght haue seyde with Seynt Paule, "Nothing schalle departe me fro the charyte of Christ." And in the payne I myght have seyde with Seynt Peter, "Lorde, saue me, I per-yssch".

In this particular case, Julian's reference to Paul (Romans 8:35-39) is not a quotation, but a kind of summary of the passage--if it is not due to a faulty memory. St. Peter, too, said "Lord, save me" (Matthew 14:30), but

2 Ibid., p. xix.

3 The passage from the AMR text is quoted in "Some Literary Influences", op. cit., p. 4.

it was on another occasion when the disciples cried out together, "Save, Lord; we are perishing" (Matthew 8:25). In the Shorter Version, it would appear that Julian does better in her use of direct quotation. In the single example of a lengthy quotation (besides the above, which occurs in both versions), we read in chapter X:

Such pains I saw that all is too little that I can tell or say of them, for it may not be told, unless every soul should feel in himself that which was in Christ Jesus, according to the saying of Saint Paul: "Let that mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus." (SGL, p. 29)

In the MS., however, the reference to Paul does not actually include a direct quotation, which here has been supplied by Julian's editor:

Swilke paynes. I saw that lle es to litelle þat y can telle or saye for itt maye nouȝt be tolde botte ulke saule aftere the sayinge of saynte Pawle schulde feelee in hym þat in criste Iesu. this shewynge of criste paynes fyllid me fulle of paynes... (AMR, p. 19)

Nevertheless we may infer from Julian's words ("every soul should feel in himself that which was in Christ Jesus") some acquaintance with the Philippians text, either in Latin or in English as it would have been translated from the Vulgate.

More common, both in the Longer and Shorter versions, is the occurrence of short phrases which may have come from scripture, or which Sr. Reynolds refers to as "scriptural phraseology." Examples from the Longer Version which she notes elsewhere⁴ are:

...the blessydfulle Trinitie made mankynd to his ymage and to his lykenes... (ch. 10, Gen. 1:26).

Whan God schulde make mannes body he toke the slyme of the erth, whych is a mater medelyd and gaderyd of all bodely thynges... (ch. 53, Gen. 2:7).

⁴ Ibid., pp. 4-5.

...touch we hym (Christ) and we schalle be made cleene. (ch. 77, Matthew 8:3).

She also points out, but refers to as short quotations, the following:

Loo me here, Gods handmayden! (ch. 4, Luke 1:38).

...thys is an awter of the Unknowyn God. (ch. 8, Acts 17:23).

The reference to Luke may be a quotation, but could be a paraphrase; the reference to Acts would seem to come from a non-Biblical source, since the relevant passage in Acts does not include any quotation from Dionysius the Areopagite (whom Paul encountered worshipping the Unknown God). In the text of the Shorter Version, as we have said, Sr. Reynolds footnotes only five instances of scriptural allusion, all of which are fairly obvious--such as "I thirst" (John 19:28) in chapter x.

Despite the inherent difficulties in locating scriptural allusions, it is worthwhile to follow Reynolds' example in pointing out short phrases which have the ring of scripture about them, even if they were not intended as direct quotations. It is possible to identify about forty different examples in the Shorter Version alone, bearing in mind that most must remain hypothetical for the reasons we have already seen. Some reasonably sound examples from the Shorter Version are:

If it be Thy will that I have it, grant it me; and if it be not Thy will, good Lord be not displeased, for I will not but as Thou willest. (ch. I; Mark 14:36).

...and then I saw that when compassion for his fellow-Christians flows naturally from a man who is in charity, this is Christ in him. (ch. XIII; Galatians 2:20, 1 John 3:21-24).

I say not that I need no more teaching, for our Lord, with the shewing of this, has left me to Holy Church: I am hungry and thirsty, and needy and sinful and frail...(ch. XIII; (Matthew 5:6)).

Thus may we say, enjoying: "Our part is our Lord." (ch. XIV; Joshua 24:14, Luke 10:42).

But now if thou be moved to say or think: 'Since this is true, then were it a good thing to sin, so as to have the more reward,' beware of this stirring, and despise it, for it is of the enemy. (ch. XVIII; Romans 3:8, Romans 6:1).

For in this shewing our Lord taught me the same, to pray to have, of God's gift, Faith, Hope and Charity, and to keep us therein unto the end of our lives. (ch. XVIII; 1 Corinthians 13:13).

Similar paraphrases or short phrases, including the above, may be found throughout the Longer Version, including the following:

And therefore it belongeth to us to love our God, in whom we have our being... (ch. 15; Acts 17:28).

For he despiseth nothing of what he hath made. (ch. 5; Wisdom 11:23).

For no man may see God and live after, that is, in this mortal life. (ch. 43; Exodus 33:20)

In the Longer Version, however, scriptural allusions appear to be less directly related to the words of specific texts though they may be more expressive of the point of various scriptural passages. Perhaps the most striking example is a beautifully flowing sentence in chapter 61, which contains the thought of several identifiable texts at once:

He kindleth our understanding, He directeth our way, He easeth our conscience, He comforteth our soul, He lighteneth our heart, and giveth us, in part, knowing and believing in His blissful Godhead... (Warrack, p. 152; 1 John 5:20, Psalm 111:10 [Vulgate 110], Psalm 23 [V 22], Daniel 2:21, 1 Corinthians 1:30, James 3:17).

Some other examples from the Longer Version are the following:

Also in this he shewed a little thing, the size of a hazelnut, which seemed to lie in the palm of my hand; and it was round as any ball. I looked upon it with the eye of my understanding, and thought, "What may this be?" I was answered in a general way, thus: "It is all that is made." (ch. 5; Job 12:10).

God, of thy goodness, give me thyself; for thou art enough to me, and I can nothing ask that is less that would be full worship of thee. And if I ask anything that is less, ever me wanteth; for in thee only have I all. (ch. 5; Psalm 16:2 [V 15], Psalm 73:25 [V 72] and parallels).

That it is God that worketh this, is shewed where it is said: "He cometh down to us, to the lowest part of our nees." For he despiseth nothing of what he hath made. (ch. 5: Wisdom 11:23, Job 10:3, Hebrews 2:17, Philipians 2:7).

The mother may suffer her child to fall... (ch. 61; Isaiah 49:15-16)

For I saw (even as it is known in our faith) that then, pain and sorrow shall be ended in all that shall be saved. (ch. 75; Isaiah 35:10, Revelation 7:15-17).

What is impossible to thee is not impossible to me; I shall save my word in all things--I shall make all things well. (ch. 32; Matthew 19:26, Romans 11:23).

Then shall we all come into our Lord--ourselves clearly knowing, God abundantly having--until we are endlessly hid in God--him truly seeming and abundantly feeling, him ghostly hearing and delectably smelling...And there shall we see God face to face. (ch. 43; 1 Corinthians 13:12, 1 John 3:2, Colossians 3:3).

And Christ, in his body, mightily beareth us up into heaven. (ch. 55; John 12:32, theme of Daniel 7).

And in chapter 75, Julian makes use of this graphic image to describe the Day of Judgement:

Wherefore it needs must be that all heaven and all earth shall tremble and quake, when the pillars shall tremble and quake. (seemingly taking Samson's revenge Judges 16:29 as an allegory of Doom.)

There is no need to cite the many references to the Passion of Christ, which of course is central to the Revelations. Ultimately, these derive from the Gospel narratives; but Julian nowhere quotes directly from the Passion narratives, and the best we can say with certainty is that she was familiar with the events.

Altering slightly the categories suggested by Sr. Reynolds, it might be helpful to think of Julian's use of scripture in the Longer Version as being of two main types. First is her apparent reference to the themes of particular passages, which she summarizes more or less in her own words. This kind

of allusion is especially noticeable where a scriptural concept or event occurs only once or twice in the Bible. The second is much more general: the expansion of important themes which appear throughout the Bible, such as the steadfast love of God, or the nature of sin and the fall of man. The second category depends less upon the words of scripture itself than does the first, although neither necessarily implies that Julian used a Bible in composing her own passages.

Sr. Reynolds notes several Biblical themes which can be related to specific passages of the Revelations:⁵ the idea of the "motherhood" of God (ch. 59), which may have been derived from Isaiah 49, and especially 51 and 66:13, Matthew 23:37 and others; the Church as the "bride" of Christ (ch. 52) from the Song of Songs; the soul as the "city of God" (ch. 51 and 67) from Psalms 45, 47, 86, 132 and 126 (Vulgate enumeration); the duality of man's nature (ch. 29 and 52) as seen in Romans 7:15-25, 2 Corinthians 4:16 and parallels; and the Church as the "body" of Christ (chapters 51, 53, 54, etc.) from 1 Corinthians 12:27, Romans 12:5, Ephesians 1:23, and parallels.

The influence, at least in a thematic way, of the Pauline epistles is probably much greater than Sr. Reynolds has indicated here. Hudleston, in his edition of the Revelations,⁶ suggests that Julian's concept of sin and forgiveness in chapter 37 (which Hudleston sees as bordering on heresy) derives from Romans 4:8, in which Paul quotes Psalm 32:1-2. The Psalm reads:

Blessed is the man to whom the LORD imputes no iniquity, and
in whose spirit there is no deceit.

5 Ibid., p. 4.

6 Hudleston, p. xxxi.

Possibly Julian understood this passage, either as it appears in Romans or in the Psalm itself, in a more general way, i.e., "blessed is man, to whom the LORD imputes no iniquity." The Vulgate, at least may be read this way, and such is the burden of Julian's theology in chapters 37, 51, 82, and so on, though she confines her remarks to the Christian man. More broadly, she seems to be developing the theology of Romans 8-11, expanding the relevant texts and carrying Paul's arguments to their logical conclusions. Although Julian has sometimes been accused of universalism in her vision that "all shall be well" (chapter 27), it is enlightening to read the Revelations alongside Paul's arguments in Romans, especially Romans 11:13-26. Here Paul argues that God has the power to bring back the Jews into salvation (verse 23; compare Mark 10:27); that God "has consigned all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all" (verse 32); and that "from him and through him and to him are all things" (verse 36). This last statement echoes 2 Corinthians 5:19:

God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

Julian has noticed the importance of "the world" in this passage, and in the whole of Pauline thought, and--whether or not she actually knew these passages in Paul's letters--she seems to be drawing on the thought contained there in her development of the concept of forgiveness, especially in ch. 51 of the Revelations.

One chapter of the Revelations is especially reminiscent of the theology of St. Paul, and at the same time has been seen as one of the most controversial. In ch. 11, Julian develops her concept of sin, beginning with her vision

of God "in a point." She takes her vision to mean that God is at work in all things; and that, nevertheless, God is not the origin of sin. From this she concludes that sin does not have any real existence (or is not a deed), but rather that it is the absence of God's action. An important ramification of her ideas here is a concept of predestination, about which she is very clear:

I saw truly that God doeth all things be they never so little.
And I saw truly that nothing is done by hap or by chance, but
all by the foreseeing wisdom of God...For those things that are
in the foreseeing wisdom of God from without-beginning, which
he rightfully and worshipfully and continually bringeth to their
best end, in their coming-about they fall to our notice suddenly
and without our knowledge...all that is done is well done, since
our Lord God doeth all. (p. 66).

In fact, God speaks to Julian saying:

See, I am God: see, I am in all things: see, I do all things:
see, I never lift my hands off my works...I lead all thing to
the end that I ordain it to, from without-beginning, by the same
might, wisdom and love that I made it with. (pp. 67-68).

Immediately one thinks of Ephesians 1:16-23, which seems to be the source for Julian's use of the word "all":

and he has put all things under his feet and has made him the
head over all things for the church, which is his body, the
fulness of him who fills all in all.

We have already remarked that elsewhere Julian seems to develop the thought of Romans 11 and 2 Corinthians, where it bears on the reconciliation of all things to God, in Christ. In ch. 11 of the Revelations, she draws together a number of Pauline ideas which are related. For example, if God in Christ "fills all in all," then God cannot be the agent of sin. Paul notes this himself in Galatians 2:17, and again in Romans 7:23. It is difficult to say whether Julian knew all these passages, or simply reached Paul's conclusion independently; or, what is further possible, knew of still another scripture passage which Paul may also have had in mind. Ecclesiasticus 15:11-13 comes very close to

Julian's idea:

Do not say, "The Lord was responsible for my sinning," for he is never the cause of what he hates... (Jerusalem Bible)

In the Vulgate, this passage is less clear, but still gives the sense that God is not the source of sin (or, in this case, the lack of Godly wisdom). Julian might have been familiar with any one of these passages, but more likely with the train of thought which Paul develops in Romans and elsewhere, with regard to the origin of sin.

A further comparison of ch. 11 with the Pauline epistles brings out numerous parallels, not only in Romans but also in Ephesians and Colossians. She seems to be familiar with Romans 8:28-30, for example, and with its parallel in Colossians 1:15-20. That she knew these epistles is further suggested by the fact that she occasionally uses "scriptural phraseology" especially reminiscent of the Pauline epistles, as in ch. 55:

And Christ, in his body, mightily beareth us up into heaven. For I say that Christ, us all having in him--that shall be save by him--worshipfully presenteth his father in heaven with us. Which present with full thanks his Father receiveth, and courteously giveth it unto his Son, Jesus Christ. (p. 151).

Her words echo Ephesians 2:6, 2:16, 5:27 and so on. And in ch. XVI of the Shorter Version Julian repeats, as we have seen, Paul's concept of the church in Ephesians: "Christ is the church, his body..."

Having already noted some allusions to Romans in the Revelations, it is important to recognize at least one more, which is one of the more important elements of Julian's thought. It is summed up in the well-known passage in ch. 41, in which Jesus says to Julian, "I am the ground of thy beseeching." This theme, that God is the source of our prayers and prays in us by His Spirit, is developed fully in ch. 41-43 of the Revelations. It is suggested by

Ecclesiasticus 15 and is a traditional Wisdom theme in the Old Testament, but it is probably more familiar to us in Romans 8:26 ff:

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words...

We know, from a source outside the Revelations itself, that Julian may well have known the actual words, as well as the content, of Romans 8, part of which she seems to have adapted here. Margery Kempe, in ch. 18 of her Book, writes:⁷

Saint Paul saith that the Holy Ghost asketh for us with mourning and weeping unspeakable, that is to say, he maketh us to ask and pray with mourning and weeping so plenteously that the tears may not be numbered...Holy Writ saith that the soul of a rightful man is the seat of God, and so I trust, sister, that ye be...

This is the only instance in which Julian mentions "Holy Writ" specifically; but it indicates Julian's knowledge of Romans 8:26 (for whatever exegetical purpose), as well as the thought which Paul expounds elsewhere, that the body is the temple of God--cf. 1 Corinthians 3:16, 2 Corinthians 6:16, and Ephesians 2:22.

So far we have seen some possible scriptural sources for Julian's ideas, as well as for the particular words (or "phraseology") which she used when she composed the Revelations. Now we may turn to some of the broader themes of the Bible which appear in the Revelations. Earlier we noted a few of these as they related to particular passages in the Bible, principally in the New Testament--especially the Pauline epistles. Some of Sr. Reynolds' examples relate to the Old Testament as well, though there is less textual evidence

7 Book, p. 73.

that Julian actually knew these passages. On the other hand, the scriptural bases for Julian's images (such as the Church as the bride) can be seen as much more widespread than the particular passages which have already been suggested. This is especially true if we concern ourselves more with Julian's thought, than with the particular words, or even the image, that she uses. For example: "the church is the bride of Christ" calls to mind key passages (Song of Songs, John 3:29, Revelations 22:17) because of the key words involved (e.g., "church" and "bride"), which occur together in only a few scripture passages. We can expand this theme, however, to "the steadfast love of God for his bride." Put this way, a much greater body of scripture is suggested: e.g., parts of Hosea, Isaiah, Psalms, and so on.

Perhaps the clearest example of this kind of thematic reliance on scripture in the Revelations has been brought to light, oddly enough, by Julian's critics, who cannot agree whether Julian's ideas are "scriptural" (orthodox) or not. In the introduction to his edition, Clifton Wolters echoes other editors in seeing Julian's vision, that "In God there may be no wrath" (ch. 13 and parallels), as setting aside the biblical concept of divine wrath.⁸

Fr. Wolters may be guilty, in his inference that Julian is not taking the "teaching of the Bible" into account, of the error warned against by Julian's scribe. If we take the bald statement that "there is no wrath in God" by itself, we may indeed doubt that Julian was very orthodox at all--even less that she knew something about the accounts of God's wrath in the Old Testament. On the other hand, her argument is really quite different. In ch. 13 she is taught how the "Fiend" is overcome by the passion of Christ. The malice

8 Wolters, p. 37.

and wrath of Satan is contrasted with the love and gentleness of God, who has the best interest of his beloved in mind. (p. 70). Julian hardly denies that God despises sin, even the sinfulness of mankind; but she wishes to show how the humiliation of the Son of God is more powerful than the wrath of the Fiend. "Wrath", in this passage, refers to the way of evil, the destructive anger that characterizes all that is not of God.

Seen in its context, her statement is not at all what it may appear to be. In ch. 45, 48, 49, 51, and others. Julian develops the concept of the steadfast love of God, the love which is God (cf. especially ch. 46), who created and sustains all that is (ch. 11) who means to "one" us to Himself in love (ch. 84-86) and who does not forgive, in the ordinary sense, because in him there is no condemnation in the first place (ch. 49). In another context, she can even say that "God is angry with us for our sin" (ch. 40, Wolters); but she is implying a displeasure which can only be seen in the light of absolute, forgiving Love.

Understanding Julian in this way--taking the Revelations as a whole--it is possible to discern a host of scripture passages in the background, some of which, at least, she might have had in mind. Some of them are as familiar to us today as they would have been to anyone in her time--for example, John 3:16-17:

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

Other less-familiar passages could easily have been in the background of Julian's thought, though they would have required a more refined knowledge either of the Bible, or of Biblical theology, on her part. Micah 7:18-20, Ezekiel

36:26 ff., or Psalm 130 are examples of texts which support Julian's contention that God is only love, and in Him there is no wrath at all for the Christian man. A study of similar passages in the Bible will show that whenever the anger of Yahweh is mentioned in the Old Testament, there is a corresponding mention of God's steadfast love, and of the chastening purpose of God's anger with Israel, His child and His bride. Even if Julian had only a knowledge of a few Psalms, or of Deuteronomy or of Job, or of Isaiah 53-55--to name but a few--there would have been sufficient reason for her to argue (or to see in her vision) that it is the nature of God to love all things that He has made, and to take upon himself the sin of all mankind. As we have already seen, this is the way in which Paul understood the Old Testament himself, as he argues in Romans (cf. ch. 3-11), Ephesians (cf. 1:10), and Colossians (1:15-20). In his book on Julian's concept of prayer, Paulo Molinari anticipates the argument that Julian's apparent universalism is not scriptural. He concludes: "As I have shown in my analysis, from the consideration of God's love Julian derives her optimism, her trust in God alone and her deep joy. And this conception corresponds equally well to the teaching of Holy Scripture."⁹

There are other examples of scriptural parallels with Julian's theological outlook, enough to convince one that her ideas, at least, have a solid scriptural basis. It has been argued in a brief monograph by Fr. Walsh that Julian's concept of the indwelling of God in the Christian bears a close affinity with Johannine theology as well as the actual texts of John's gospel and epistles.¹⁰ Fr. Walsh's argument could easily be expanded, and would be a

9 Op. cit., p. 189.

10 "God's Homely Loving", op. cit.

valuable topic for a more detailed analysis of Julian's theology. The scriptural basis of Julian's concept of the "motherhood" of God has also been explored briefly in a monograph¹¹ and there is room in the Revelations for exploration of several other such themes, e.g., the nature of sin, especially with regard to disobedience (ch. 51); the humanity of Christ and his relation to the Holy Spirit (ch. 18, etc.); the relation of the Trinity to the Incarnation (ch. 58); and the relation between grace and faith (ch. 6, 7, 10, etc.). In a still broader sense, Julian's doctrine of prayer can be seen as "scriptural", and although Fr. Molinari does not give examples of references to scripture in the Revelations with regard to prayer, the burden of his book is to demonstrate the orthodoxy of her concepts.

If, as it would appear from what we have just seen, Julian had some knowledge of Scripture, what exactly was her source? There are several reasons for suspecting that she may not have read the Bible herself. We have already said that she may or may not have been literate--a question which may never be convincingly resolved. However, there is evidence within the Revelations itself that she knew the Bible more through hearing than through reading--that is, that someone read to her, either from a translation of the Vulgate or by rendering the Vulgate into English extemporaneously.

A review of what we have already seen about Julian's apparent use of scripture in the Revelations suggests three reasons for thinking that she did not read the Bible herself. First, there are very few direct references to scripture in either version of the Revelations. There is only the one instance

11 Albert, Sister M., O.P., "God is our Mother", in The Life of the Spirit, Vol. II no. 15, May 1945, pp. 49-53.

of an acknowledged direct quotation in the Longer Version ("I might have said with Saint Paul...", ch. 15) and there are only two in the Shorter Version.

It was not uncommon for medieval English scholars to quote from the Bible, or to paraphrase, without indicating their sources in scripture. The works of Richard Rolle or Walter Hilton provide well-known examples. On the other hand, most writers indicate a scriptural source at least once. Julian never does, and does not even use the more common means of referring to scripture such as "according to Canticles" or "as the Psalm says". She does refer to St. Paul, but knows him more as a saint of the Church than as the author of Romans, (ch. 15). In her reference to Romans, and refers generally to "Holy Writ".

It has been pointed out that she tends to misquote scripture even at her best, though, as we have said, it is difficult to be sure whether she misquotes or not without being certain of her sources.¹² In any case, she does not make any of the obvious blunders that sometimes reveal a writer's true ignorance of scripture. She does not, for example, confuse Peter with Paul. Yet, she nowhere makes a deliberate effort to quote accurately from scripture. Rather, she summarizes the content of a passage or the significance of an event. This treatment sets her apart from many of her contemporaries, especially the learned preachers whose purpose would have been exegetical. Julian is not an exegete but merely wishes to convey the content of her sixteen visions of May, 1373. Thus there is no reason to suppose that she ever intends to quote directly from scripture; it is not important to her work.

Let us suppose, however, that she does mean to give us scripture as accurately as she can. We should observe that she never quotes from or paraphrases

12 Reynolds, SGL, p. xviii.

the Latin. This may seem an obvious point, especially since she hardly quotes scripture at all; but it is significant in light of her own claim not to be a learned person. If she had known the Vulgate, and if she had further intended to quote from it, there is every reason to suppose that she would have quoted from it as she read it--in Latin. On the basis of the fact that she avowedly writes for her "even-Christians", it might be argued that she deliberately avoids quoting from the Latin; however, on this hypothesis it would make sense for her to have quoted first in Latin, following each quotation with an English translation or paraphrase, or perhaps a homily. This is the style of the Ancrone Riwe, and it is the method followed by her contemporaries, such as Richard Rolle in his paraphrase of the Psalms, and Walter Hilton. Furthermore, it would make more sense if one wished to make certain passages plain to those who would not understand them in their commonest form.

One striking passage in the Revelations which seems to indicate that she had not, in fact, read a Bible even if she did know something of its contents is to be found in chapter 10:

We know in our faith and in our belief through the teaching and the preaching of the Holy Church that the blissful Trinity made man's kind to his image and likeness. (p. 64).

Sr. Reynolds points out that the words "to his ymage and to his lykeness" reflect Genesis 1:26;¹³ there is a parallel with the text of the Wyclif Bible, which would have been contemporary with Julian's composition of the Revelations, though it is later than the time of her visions.¹⁴ Yet it is curious

¹³ "Some Literary Influences", op. cit., p. 9.

¹⁴ A recent edition of this portion of the Wyclif Bible contemporary with Julian is by Lindberg, Conrad, ed., MS. Bodley 959: Genesis-Baruch 3:20 in the Earlier Version of the Wycliffite Bible, 5 Vols., Almqvist and Wiksell, Stockholm, 1959.

that Julian does not relate the text to Genesis herself, but rather, to "the teaching and the preaching of Holy Church". Clifton Wolters, in his translation, (p. 78), takes her words to mean, "We know from our creed..." (MSS. "feayth", where "creed" and "faith" are similar concepts in Middle English). If "creed" is what she meant, it would show that she was indeed more familiar with teaching and preaching than with the Bible itself; but it would further demonstrate her inability to translate even the memorized Latin creeds, since none of the creeds she might have said refers to the making of man in the likeness of God. More likely, she meant to emphasize the fact that the Church taught this doctrine. Whatever the case, it is notable that she does not say "It says in Genesis..." In fact, there is no passage in the Revelations where she mentions either Holy Scripture or the Bible by name.

Whether or not Julian meant to refer to scripture directly, we might ask to what extent it is necessary for her to have read it herself. Although a direct quotation from the Bible would seem to imply that the author had read the scripture, it is not necessary to think so even in our own times. Much of scripture has come down to us verbally, in the form of short sayings commonly quoted in conversation but seldom acknowledged (and perhaps seldom recognized as Biblical in origin), "Spare the rod and spoil the child" (Proverbs 13:24) or "A soft answer turns away wrath" (Proverbs 15:1) are but two examples among many. That this is possible in a distinctly secular age indicates its likelihood in a Catholic age, in which everyone was familiar with the teachings of the Church to some extent, including such phrases from scripture as were repeated often in conversation or in preaching.

Modern children, too, become acquainted with the Bible through memorized songs and prayers. Some churches commonly sing "choruses", which are passages

(usually from the Authorized Version of the Bible) which have been set to music either directly from scripture or in rhyme. In less literate times, these mnemonic forms were far more in evidence than they are today. Scriptures which would have been used by the faithful in daily prayers in the Latin breviaries, or later in the Lay Folk's Prayer Book) would be widely known, just as we teach our children the Lord's Prayer today. That verses might have been memorized from Latin versions despite one's ignorance of the language otherwise ought not be too surprising. Catholics in our own time often know the old liturgy by heart even when they may not have understood it word for word as it was said in the Mass.

So far we have seen a few reasons for thinking that Julian may not have read the Bible herself, or in any case did not need to have read it in order to refer to it in the way that she does in the Revelations. Further historical evidence outside the text would support the argument that, in fact, she did not need to read the Bible itself, even if she knew much of it by heart.

In an exhaustive study of the Bible in medieval England,¹⁵ Margaret Deanesly has provided generous evidence that a woman of Julian's day would not have seen scripture (at least in the form of a whole Bible) either in the Vulgate or in translation, for essentially two reasons: first, the Vulgate was not widely available, even to clergy or to religious even in religious houses; and second, the Bible simply was not translated into the vernacular until after the time of Wyclif, ten years after Julian's visions--at which time the translation of the Bible into the vernacular was specifically prohibited by the Church. Although the Lollards were advocating the translation of scripture

¹⁵ Deanesly, The Lollard Bible, op. cit., esp. ch. II-XIII.

(and by the first decade of the 15th century were being burnt at the stake in Norwich, not far from Julian's cell), it is not likely that Julian would consciously have used a Lollard Bible owing to her express desire to be orthodox in her belief. The controversy with Wyclif was not so much with the fact that scripture was rendered into English as with the theological interpretations that were associated with it. The Lollard Bibles, when they were known to be of Lollard origin, were immediately associated with heresy in the popular mind. There were, however, other sources of scripture in the vernacular, though in less complete form, which might have been made available to Julian.

In fourteenth-century England, there was agitation within the Church for the "undoing" of scripture into the vernacular for the sake of "lewid" folk-- that is, people who could not read Latin, or perhaps could not read at all. Miss Deanesly cites several examples of works which render scripture into English.¹⁶ These "translations" were not word-for-word renderings of the Vulgate into English, for this practice was suspect even before Wyclif on the grounds that "lewid" folk would not know how to make proper sense of the scriptures if they had them in their own hands. Rather, they came in the form of jingles, usually of the Psalms, or as "Gospel harmonies" (or "lives" of Christ) which were designed to give the sense of scripture rather than its actual words. One example will suffice. In Richard Rolle's rendering of Psalm 115:3 (Vulgate; 113:11 in modern editions) he writes the following:¹⁷

16 Ibid. pp. 147-152.

17 Kenyon, Frederic, ed., Facsimilies of Biblical Manuscripts in the British Museum, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1900, No. XXIII (no pagination).

Deus au(te)m noster in celo. Omnia
 quecum(ue) voluit fecit
 Our god is sobely in heuene. alle pinges
 þat he wolde he made. Als who saip
 heþene men as ken whar is our god.
 and we ansuere. he is in heuene. þat
 is mighty abouen alle creat(ur)s for
 alle þinge þat he wille gostlye or bodelye
 he made. wharfore he is alle mightye.

It is possible that if Julian did not read Latin, she nevertheless encountered or possessed various kinds of English texts or shorter works which included scripture. Rolle's Psalms, as is well known, were written for an anchoress such as she; we can see from his rendering of the verse cited above how she might have obtained sufficient material for the Revelations from even a short work of its kind.

If she read Latin, it is possible that she had a Gospel harmony in that language; though less likely that she ever saw a complete Vulgate. She would probably have had a Book of Hours (Breviary) or parts of one in Latin (or in English if someone had translated one for her private use). There may have been some laxity by her time with regard to saying prayers in English rather than Latin, but there is general agreement among scholars that she probably would have followed the Ancrene Riwe as closely as possible. If it is the case that she had a Breviary, however extensive it may have been, she had access to various scriptural passages either in the form of daily Bible readings (the lectionary) or incorporated within the prayers of the Office. The Lay Folk's Prayer Book, in a form dating c. 1420, includes all or part of over fifty different Psalms plus lessons from Job, Isaiah, and Luke.

The Ancrene Riwe prescribes the recitation of the Ave, Pater Noster and Credo (which she mentions specifically in chapter XIX of the Shorter Version),

as well as the Seven Penitential Psalms (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143), and the Five Joys of Our Lady (Magnificat plus Psalms 119 [third section], 120, 121, and 124). An anchoress would probably know these by heart; one conjectures that, like the Pater Noster, she would know them by heart in Latin without being able to speak Latin at all. We may assume that she would have known the content of these various Psalms even if she could not read them in Latin or in English. Her proximity in Norwich to Benedictine and Dominican friars meant that learned men were at least around her and possibly could have explained and translated for her.

In any case the various Psalms prescribed by the Ancrene Riwle, apart from the much more extensive Prymer, seem to provide some of the scriptural background to the Revelations. Psalm 32 (V 31) is the Psalm which St. Paul quotes in Romans 4:8, and which is alluded to by Julian in ch. 37. Psalm 38 (V 37) suggest her concern with the nature of God's wrath; and Psalm 130 (V 129) says in verse 4 that God is indeed forgiving, "That thou mayest be feared" (compare her analysis of "Holy Dread" in chapters 74, 76, etc.). Psalm 143 (V 143) verse 22 suggests the vision of the servant and Lord in chapter 51. Psalm 119 (V 118), verse 73 recalls her exposition of God's creation of man. Psalm 123 (V 122), verse 1, recalls how Julian looked heavenward as she was dying (ch. 3): "To thee I lift up my eyes, O thou who are enthroned in the heavens."

If she were familiar with the Ancrene Riwle in written form, there would scarcely be need to search for another extensive source of scripture for her. The Riwle quotes many passages from the Bible, usually citing them in Latin first, then in English. Sometimes the sources are indicated in a general way, i.e., "Psalms" or "Solomon". Julian seems to refer to some of

these passages; her experience of the Fiend with his bad stench (ch. 66), for example, recalls Isaiah 3:24, as it is quoted in the Riwle, Part II:¹⁸

But Our Lord through Isaias threatens with the stench of hell
those who here take delight in luxurious smells. "There shall
be stench instead of sweet smell."

One might suppose that an illiterate Julian would have heard scripture read aloud on Sunday in the reading of the lessons; or expounded to her during the sermon. The historical evidence, however, is that the lessons would have been read in Latin, and that the sermons, when they existed (usually on feast days), would hardly have acquainted her with the scriptures.¹⁹ If she heard the scriptures that she later quoted, it seems more likely that she heard them at her own request, probably translated for her by friends from the monasteries.

There is one other possibility: that Julian, or perhaps one of her friends was in possession of a Lollard Bible without the knowledge that this particular

18 Salu, op. cit., p. 45.

19 Deanesly, Lollard Bible, op. cit., pp. 199-200, has this to say:

There is no evidence at all among English records that the gospel was ever read in English at the beginning of the sermon till a year or two before the Reformation...The absence of reference to such a practice is decisive, because there is so much general evidence about the sermons of the period and their subject-matter, both in the decisions of diocesan synods, the books of sermons prepared for the help of the clergy, and the books to instruct them in the art of preaching. Since none of the three mention any such practice, the weight of evidence against it would seem conclusive.

From about 1300, moreover, when sermons were becoming more frequent, there was a tendency to use other illustrative matter than the gospel in popular preaching, as well as to use the saint's days legends for sermons in place of the saint's day gospels.

See also Owst, G. R., Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England, Cambridge University Press, 1933, passim.

Bible (or portion) was prohibited by the Church. The Dominicans often advocated unbinding scripture into the vernacular despite the rulings of councils on the matter, and furthermore, it is not always the case that owners of English translations realized they were of Lollard origin. A Fourteenth-century New Testament (edited by Anna Paues in 1904)²⁰ may be a case in point. This particular New Testament is incomplete as it has come down to us; nevertheless, there seems to be a deliberate predilection for the Pauline epistles over other parts of the New Testament. Possibly the writer intended to translate passages which were not already known in English--presuming for example, that the gospels had already been translated except for the portion of Matthew which is rendered in this edition. It is interesting to note that Julian's preference for Romans over other epistles or even the gospels is supported by the Paues Bible, and it has been suggested that the Paues Bible may have escaped notice being thought by its owners to be an innocent Catholic translation, even though it was almost certainly a Lollard work.²¹ If Julian had such a text herself, or heard it read to her, we can see how she might have been familiar with the actual text of Romans; whereas in the case of the passion narratives in the gospels, she would have been familiar with only the events as they were widely known and expanded in the harmonies, sermons, homilies, and miracle plays of the time.

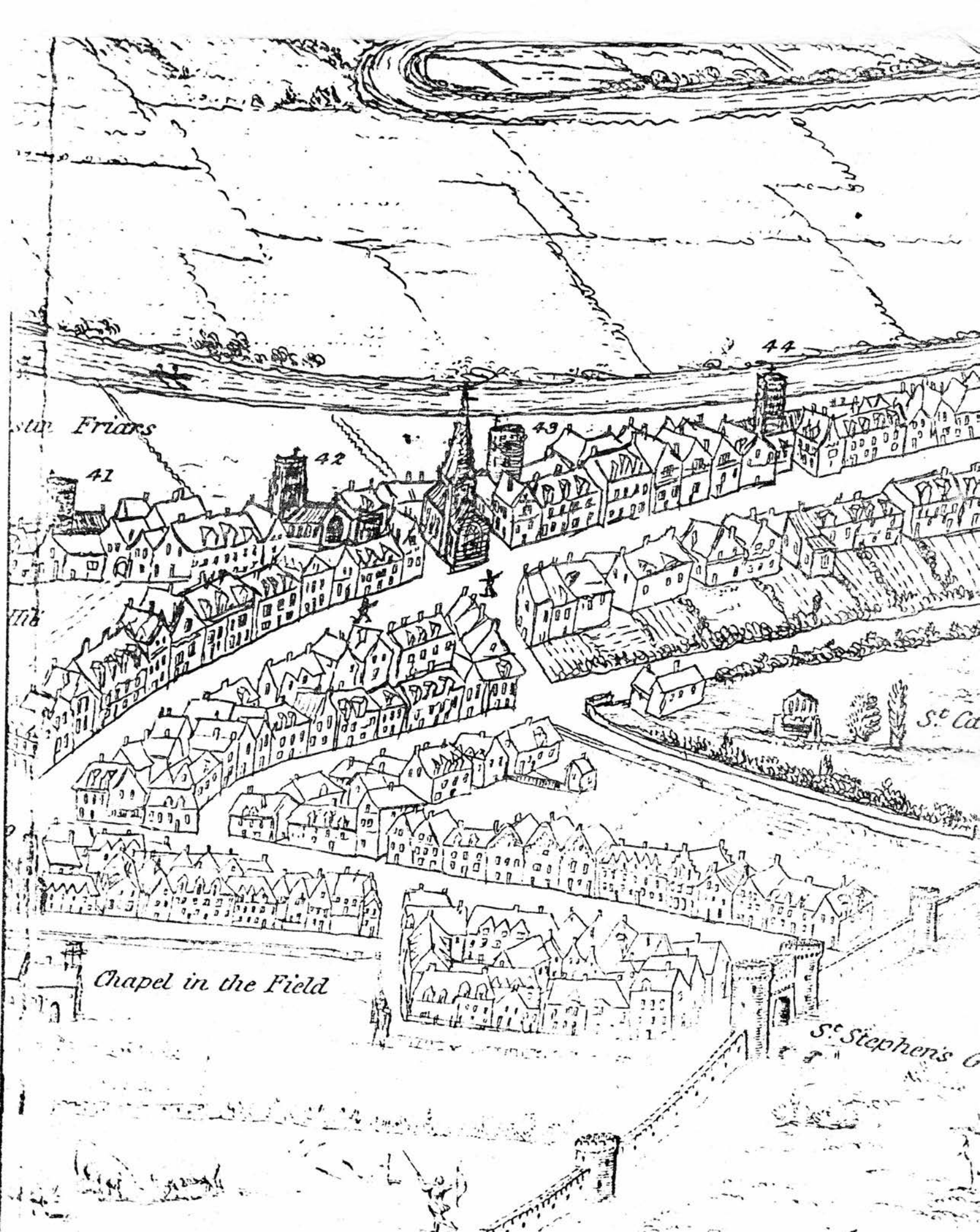
When all the evidence is taken together, it is really not clear precisely how Julian came to know the scriptures as she did. One thing is certain: that she was familiar with portions of the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, in

20 Paues, op. cit.

21 Deanesly, Lollard Bible, op. cit., p. 334.

content if not in letter, and that she incorporated her knowledge into the Revelations. It is more likely that she heard scriptures than that she read them, though she would not have heard them in English in the Mass or even in sermons. Possibly she read them (or heard them read in English, though not from a whole Bible in translation. What is very likely is that she had memorized large portions of scripture, particularly from the Psalms and perhaps from Job, Luke, Romans and the other epistles, through her daily recitation of prayers from the Breviary or Daily Offices. It would take considerable historical research to be certain what kind of Breviary she might have had and how extensive it was; but even the prayers indicated in the Ancrene Riwe and the content of The Lay Folk's Prayer Book provide enough scriptural background for the concepts and the paraphrases that we find in the Revelations.

Unfortunately our picture of Julian--whether as a scholar who read extensively and knew the Bible well, or as an ignorant woman who only knew the teaching of the Church in her heart--must remain largely a matter of personal preference, in the absence of more concrete evidence. We must, however, agree with her scribe that the Revelations is, in fact, "according to holy Scripture, and grounded in the same." It would be well if, in our own day when education is universal and the Bible readily attainable, more of our own theologians were as familiar with the scriptures as was Julian.



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